

Calvinist Contact

A Reformed Weekly

OCTOBER 11, 1991/47th year of publication/No. 2277

Drop sanctions against South Africa, say Canadian exporters

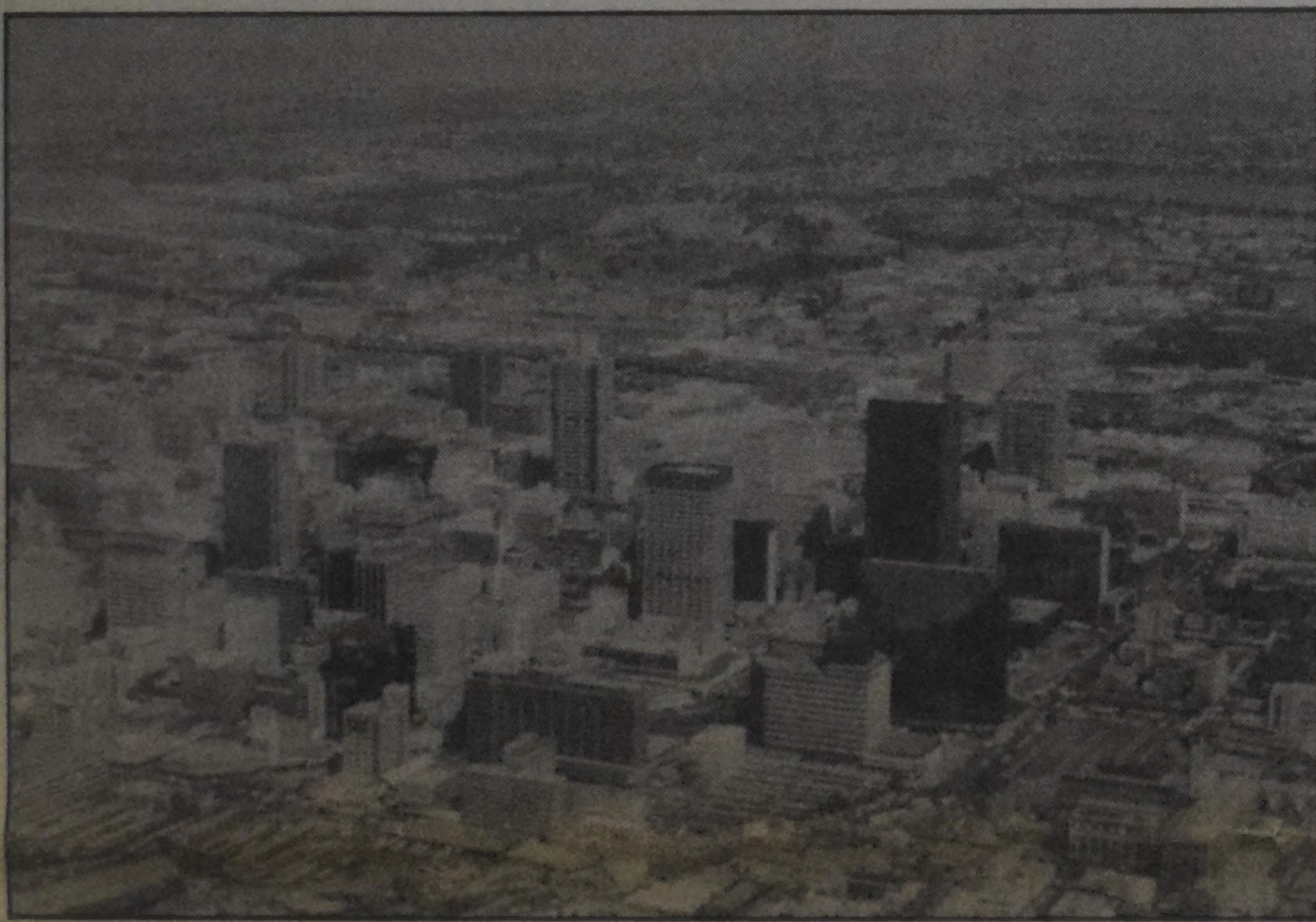


Photo: South African Panorama
The PWV area creates almost half of South Africa's wealth. Johannesburg, its core city, is a powerhouse for the subcontinent and a magnet for workseekers.

Bill Fledderus

OTTAWA — The Canadian Exporters' Association (CEA) recently urged the Canadian Government to lift trade sanctions against South Africa, saying that Canadian businesspeople are in danger of missing out on significant trading opportunities as other countries move to do business with South Africa.

James Taylor, president of the CEA, led a private-sector trade delegation on a one-week visit to South Africa in September. Prior to departure, he said that the mission was going "in anticipation that economic relations between Canada and South Africa will soon become normalized."

As the De Klerk government continues to dismantle apartheid the relaxation of Canadian trade sanctions is becoming increasingly likely. Many other countries have already lifted their sanctions.

Bright future

An economic boom in southern Africa is expected by World Bank representative John Innes, reports the South African paper *The Citizen*. Innes bases his prediction on the advent of an apartheid-free South Africa and peace accords in Angola and Mozambique.

Despite existing sanctions, Canadian exports to South Africa last year totalled \$161 million, a 52 per cent increase over 1989. South Africa's exports to Canada were valued at \$56 million.

Taylor said recently that he expects Canadian exports to increase to at least

\$500 million a year if sanctions on high technology products are removed.

At present Canada's major South African imports include ferro-chromium, platinum, rhodium, aluminium alloys and ferro-manganese. Exports to South Africa included wheat, sulphur, nickel products, potassium chloride, ash and residues with copper.

A long way to go

South Africa is the most economically powerful state in Africa. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$93.5 billion U.S. is more than all 35 neighbouring states in sub-Saharan Africa put together, reports the South African newspaper *The Star*. Its nearest African rivals are Egypt (74.4 billion) and oil-rich Algeria (\$44.8 billion).

However, compared with other countries, South Africa has a long way to go. It has one-third the GDP of Australia and less than half the GDP of poverty-stricken Mexico.

On a per capita basis, according to *The Star* article, the South African GDP means \$2,900 per person, as compared with a \$3,400 global average and a formidable \$20,000 in the U.S.

In addition to a continuing high inflation rate, South Africa must deal with the expensive proposition of bettering education, medical and housing services to accommodate the growing social demands of the post-apartheid era.

[with files from *South African Newpoint*].

Pro-choice divided on sex-selective abortions

Celeste McGovern

EDMONTON — For more than 20 years the pro-choice movement has maintained an image of solidarity. But a wide fissure appeared in mid-September after the release of an interim report from the federal royal commission on reproductive technologies.

It noted that sex-selective abortions "were widely considered unethical [because] abortion of a fetus simply because it is female is wrong and would have a discriminatory impact on women."

Pro-lifers say they'll welcome any restrictions that protect unborn children (of either sex). But the abortion lobby is divided. Some maintain that abortion should remain available for any reason, even on the grounds of discriminatory sex selection. Others adamantly oppose "wrong-sex" abortions, if only because 90 per cent of those being aborted on this ground are women.

The furore began when John Stephens, a California doctor, set up a shop south of B.C.'s border where for a \$500 fee a pregnant woman could learn (by ultrasound) the sex of her fetus. Women from Vancouver, mostly East Indian, are now making the trip to Dr. Stephens' clinic and many abort afterwards. Apparently because of a strong cultural preference for male offspring, more than 90 per cent of the abortions following Dr. Stephens' sex test are female.

Awkward position

Faced with females choosing to abort females, feminist abortion advocates find themselves in an awkward situation and many are abandoning their only article of faith: freedom of choice. In May the general assembly of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) voted unanimously for a resolution to prohibit the licensing of sex-selection clinics in an effort to curtail "misogynist" abortions.

This marked the first apparent repudiation of two decades of highly effective sloganeering about "choice"; "Women must have the right to control their own bodies"; "Abortion is a personal decision between a woman and her doctor"; "Who decides? You decide."

Some in the pro-choice ranks are now finding those slogans inconvenient. "Choice has never been the goal,"

explains Sunera Thobani, chairperson of NAC's executive committee on reproductive technology. "It's not just choice. It is part of the movement for women to reconquer power. We are looking at something much larger and more systemic here than just a woman making a choice."

Still, it may be something of a trick to apply two very different descriptions ("therapeutic abortion" and "misogyny") to the same procedure. One possible means of avoiding the contradiction is to redefine the noun "choice," something NAC seems already to have commenced doing.

"We will have to ask: 'What does choice mean?'" says Thobani. "What does choice mean when a woman decides to abort a fetus on the basis of that fetus being the same sex as herself."

All abortions discriminate

But Edmonton pro-life lawyer Rosanna Saccomani sees no logical distinction between aborting because the baby will be a girl and aborting for any other social reason. "If aborting female fetuses discriminates against women, it follows that aborting handicapped fetuses discriminates against the disabled and aborting for economic reasons discriminates against the poor. 'Unwanted' babies are discriminated against in favour of 'wanted' babies," she says. "What abortions are not discriminatory?"

See REDEFINING -- p. 2.

Thinkbit:

A missionary was asked what struck him about our culture after he had been in Africa for several years. His answer: "The size of your garbage cans." Source unknown.

In this issue:

Marian Van Til reviews "The Fisher King," an unconventional film... p. 7
Celebrate thanksgiving with Carolyn Brown Copeland and various poets... pp. 10-11
Anne Hutten has a fondness for the past... p. 12



Thanksgiving 1991

"As long as the earth endures, seed time and harvest... will never cease"
(Gen. 8:22).

Redefining Choice

...continued from p. 1.

NAC's Thobani concedes: "These are questions which NAC and other sections of the women's movement will have to address." But Miss Saccomani doesn't see why we have to wait for NAC and the feminist movement to answer the questions. "We have only to recognize fetuses as the people they are," she says, "and grant them the constitutional rights they deserve."

Maureen Hutton, chairperson of the new reproductive technologies committee for Planned Parenthood (Alberta) says that neither she nor Planned Parenthood see any connection between gender-selection discrimination and any other discrimination. "That's a whole other ball park as far as I'm concerned. At the moment we are only opposed to abortion on the gender basis," she says.

Henry Morgentaler, however, does see the connection. And, he maintains, to be consistent, abortions should be available for any reason. "It should be left to the parents to decide for what reason they want the abortion," he said in an interview last week. "I don't think that anyone should interfere with their choice even if we don't like that choice."

He gives an example: "If a couple only wants to have two children and they have already a girl and they want a boy and they find out that they will be having another girl, I think that they have a perfect right to terminate the pregnancy and try for another boy." Dr. Morgentaler suspects that, if the movement advocates any prohibitions it will soon be on a slippery slope all its own.

"You mean [Dr.

Morgentaler] has actually come out and said this with regard to sex?" queried Hutton incredulously. "I've heard him say it's a matter of choice but I don't think that's his position as far as the gender is concerned."

Morgentaler is not alone. Edwina Podemski, president of Abortion by Choice in Edmonton, shares his perspective. "[Gender selection] very well may have a discriminatory impact on women but our group supports free choice. I'm afraid that you can't say that certain reasons are good and certain reasons are bad."

"That's not the way we say it at all," responds Hutton. "A woman should be able to decide for other reasons, for example, but not for sex selection."

Gwendolyn Landolt, president of the 9,000-member women's group REAL Women, says the feminists are finally showing their true colours. "Their real objective is power," she says. "The clash in the pro-abortion movement is nothing new."

Landolt says that, whereas Morgentaler's aims have always been limited and clear, the feminist agenda is far larger. "They are a small number of illogical radicals who want to determine what's right for all women and make sure they stick to it."

She notes that, while NAC claims millions of members, there are only 2,600 people nationwide on its mailing list. "If the rules they've made in the past don't work in their favour, they bend them or break them," she adds. "The aim of their game is not equality — it's supremacy."

Reprinted with permission from the Sept. 23, 1991, issue of Western Report.

Rural routes



Maynard Vander Galien

Of Thanksgiving, immigrants and good stewardship

Maynard Vander Galien

One of my earliest memories of going to church was in the late 1950s when we went to a Thanksgiving Day service at our Chr. Ref. church in Renfrew, Ont. I remember it well because there was a display of garden produce near the pulpit. During the afternoon my father plowed a grain field; I thought that was an odd thing to do after a church service, even if it was a Monday.

I have a hunch the Thanksgiving Day service is still a special one for children in the Reformed community. In our church it is the custom that youngsters bring along some garden produce to be displayed on a table near the pulpit. The children beam proudly as they bring in their pumpkins, cabbage, stalks of corn and a whole variety of vegetables that grew in their family's garden this past summer.

I hope those children will also remember this special day when they are older and be reminded of God's goodness to them.

A few weeks ago our church celebrated another kind of Thanksgiving Day. It was 40 years ago that the Renfrew church was organized and church services began. Rev. Hans Uittenbosch, who was the church's first installed minister, was present for a special service and told many humorous stories of those early church years.

Many of the early Dutch immigrants came to the Ottawa Valley from 1948 to 1958. The farmers settled where the land was flat and productive; they worked hard. Those early immigrants wanted their own church in which they could sing the Dutch psalms and listen to sermons in their own language.

Getting to feel at home

The well-established Chr. Ref. Church in the United States understood the needs of the early Dutch immigrant families and sent home missionaries to many areas in Canada where immigrants had settled. That's something else for which we should be thankful.

Rev. John Rubingh, a minister whose name is still often mentioned by members of our congregation, was appointed as "home missionary" for Eastern Ontario and helped many area families find housing and work. He

was also instrumental in establishing our church in Renfrew and other churches in Eastern Ontario.

Some things have certainly changed for the better since I was a boy and had to memorize long catechism lines. I can remember going to a congregational meeting in the mid 1960s at which the minister told the farmers not to pollute the air with talk of cows, calves and pigs. But during the coffee-break intermission, a real pollution problem, one that makes your clothes stink, was everywhere: windows had to be opened to let out the smokey haze.

In the 1990s farmers can freely chat at church about their cows, calves and new machinery. The heavy smokers are not with us anymore and those few who still smoke dare not light up when coffee is served in the church basement.

Stewardly or stingy?

But many people in my church, and I'm sure in other Reformed churches in Canada, still act as if they are penniless new immigrants. Many of the early Dutch immigrants shared their *Calvinist Contact* and other favourite Dutch publications with relatives and friends to save a few dollars. That hasn't changed.

At our last fall congregational meeting it was suggested that we have a recycling box near the entrance of our church, into which people can drop their *Calvinist Contact* and *Banners*.

Churchgoers who don't subscribe to these Christian papers can pick them up and read them and return them the following Sunday so others can read them too. An elder calls it good stewardship. I don't.

I don't see anybody sharing the expensive daily newspapers. No one shares the local newspapers. Three or four people don't share the \$2.50-plus magazines. But when it comes to Christian publications people are real penny-pinchers. I know some *Calvinist Contacts* which really travel around after they arrive at their first home. Is that good stewardship? Readers, what do you think?

Maynard Vander Galien farms in the Ottawa Valley (Renfrew) and writes a column for local newspapers.

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After having taken the pulse of the country I would describe its condition in two words: impatient and nervous. Much like a person awaiting surgery. Impatient to get this mid-constitutional crisis behind us, and more than a bit nervous about the possible outcome. The mother of all constitutional proposals is running into a lot of trouble in Quebec where even the youth wing of Bourassa's own party has rejected it outright. Bourassa who spoke with mild and measured approval of the unity proposal might be in deep political trouble as 70 per cent of decided Quebecers oppose the constitutional draft.

★ ★ ★

Monsieur donned academic regalia and spoke at the Stanford University of California where he implored the G-7 nations to "kick start the Soviet economy." A bit of power-charge for the Canadian economy would do no harm either, of course; but this was a "statemanship number" aimed at getting credit for international initiative." President Bush did a similar number, but I will throw my cynical wet blanket on that when we come to it.

★ ★ ★

First, though, we must meditate on the remarks by Justice Minister Kim Campbell, who considers our national anthem to be sexist when it calls for true patriot love in all its sons. Madam Campbell suggested as an alternative "in all thy children command." Now your humble correspondent confesses to have vocal talents which equal those of a bullfrog with laryngitis, but deep in my atonal psyche I know that Campbell's version won't wash. I tried it in the shower, and it just didn't jive. I would even prefer Josh Freed's Americanized version which he proposed in the *Montreal Gazette*:

*O say can you see
a distinct society
with a bit of B. and B.
and two thirds of triple E.*

Although I am not too impressed with that version, either. Sorry, Josh! A case of real sexism can be found in what Italians say to each other after a sneeze: "Good health and male children."

★ ★ ★

There was also another proposal that, I think, won't have much of a chance of being accepted. It was made in

Ottawa's city hall when councillor Mark Maloney (rhymes with a kind of sausage) moved that an — as yet unnamed — lane be designated the "Elvis Lives Lane."

★ ★ ★

Ever heard of Moosehead beer? It is brewed in New Brunswick and has quite a reputation. You can order it in New York City, but not in Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal. That's the result of crazy Canadian internal trade barriers. The Canadian Manufacturers Association has claimed that these barriers costs us annually 6.5 billion, or \$1,000 per Canadian family. Not to mention the fact that Moosehead beer and who knows how many other goodies remain strangers to our tastebuds.

★ ★ ★

On October 21 Canadians officials will meet with their U.S. counterparts in Denver to negotiate a new agreement for the airline industry. It is rumoured that the Canadian government will propose that U.S. airlines will be free to compete with Canadian carriers for domestic and foreign passengers from within Canada. The Canadian airline industry is already on life support and this will probably pull the plug.

★ ★ ★

Are we going to have three provinces with N.D.P. governments? Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia? It is not so much that we all suffer from political pink eye, but we're willing to try anything. Just to get us going.

★ ★ ★

Manitobans know where there's a buck to be made. Premier Gary Filmon is just back from a sales promotion trip to Russia and the Ukraine. Already Manitoba-based firms are doing business in Mother Russia. Winnipeg's Sundale eggs is in Kiev producing, packaging, storing and distributing eggs. Central Canadian Structures has just built a hotel in St. Petersburg and Feedrite is penetrating the market in Kazakhstan. It's a sort of reverse transaction; in 1874 many Russians left the mother land to come to Manitoba to make a living. Now Manitobans return the favour.

★ ★ ★

Just a little note: in 1990 Canada spent \$12,360,000,000 on the military. Look what it got us: three leaky submarines

as modern as the 4000-year-old man discovered in the Alps, and when we had to send a miniature flotilla to the Gulf, the Navy had to borrow a gun from the war museum.

★ ★ ★

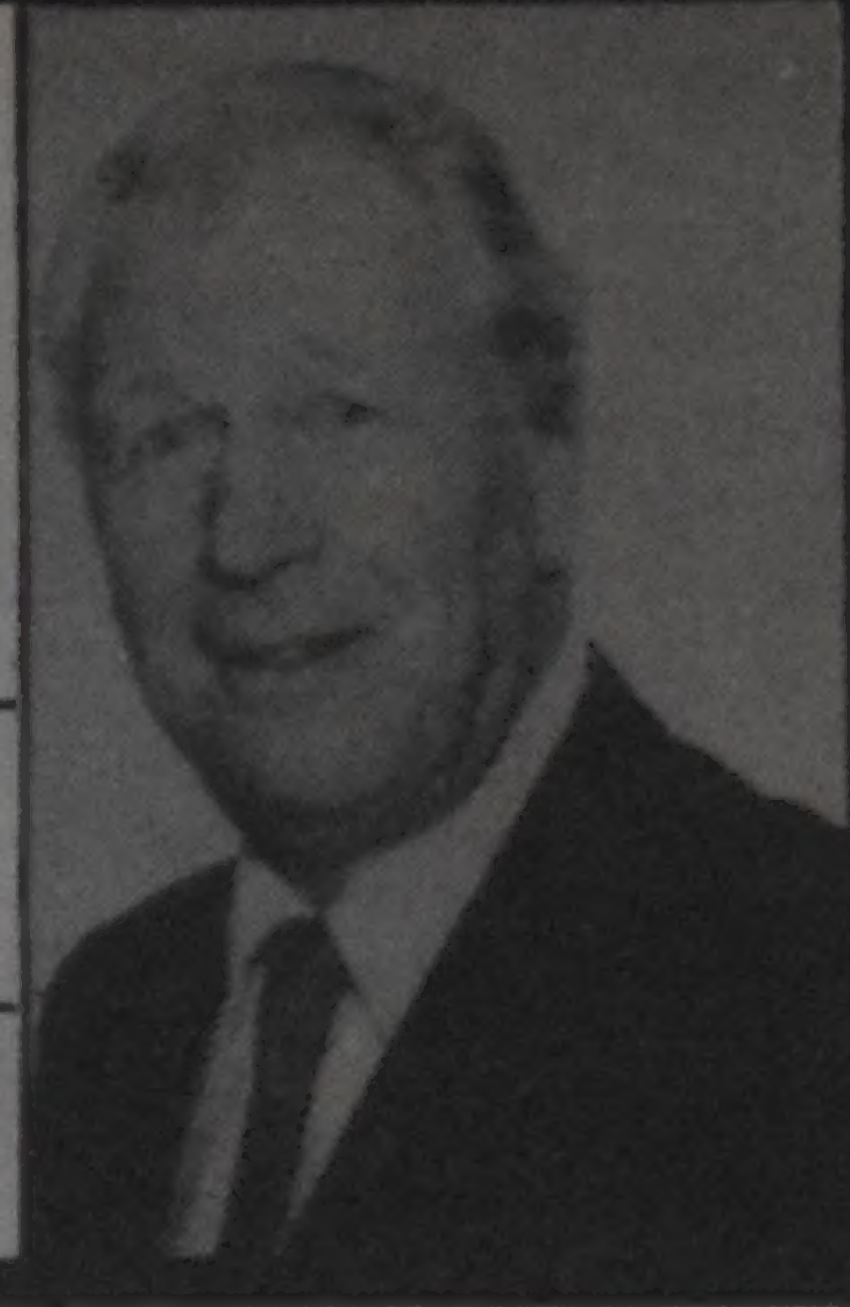
In a couple of months the European Community chiefs will meet in the Dutch city of Maastricht to decide on political union. The Dutch have drafted a proposal for a supranational Europe with sweeping powers for the European parliament. Many European heads of state are caught off guard by the Dutch proposal and a counter draft — the so-called Luxembourg proposal — is being discussed in a flurry of diplomatic activity in European capitals.

★ ★ ★

President Bush unilaterally took some disarmament measures. *The New York Times* dripping with red hot admiration wrote: "Sensing that the world had arrived at a moment when history must be seized by the throat, Bush demanded nothing in return." All genuflect please. Gimme a break. Most of the stuff was destined for the nuclear attic anyway. Did any intercontinental missiles come

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl



off the Trident submarines? So what if the B-52 bombers are off the round-the-clock alert. I bet they can scramble in twelve hours if not less.

President Bush' initiative is worthy of praise no doubt, but it also compares somewhat to taking a spoon full of water out of the sea to dry the ocean. Nevertheless the nation, and perhaps nations will ooh and aah in acute brotherly love.

★ ★ ★

Vancouverites, Torontonians and other assorted Canadians are usually complaining about high rents. In the German capital it isn't much better. A group of artists who had rented an abandoned warehouse saw their rent in one week go from \$1,000 to \$2,600 per month. Young Nazi brutes are on the prowl again in Germany assaulting immigrants. Deutschland, Deutschland....

Last week I left my briefcase in Grand Rapids. Now I live without my agenda which is a bit like being a sailor at sea without a compass. I don't know where to go, what to do and whom to see. I solved the situation by staying at home and being nice to my wife, which has resulted so far in one irate caller asking me where I was, and my wife asking me what's the matter with me. Home, I found out, is nice. Three meals a day, tea in the afternoon, the mailcarrier wishing me good morning, the neighbour asking semi-anxiously whether I am sick, and the sound of my wife doing kitchen things.

Still — get me my agenda already.

Carl Tuyl is a member of the Ontario Provincial Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy and a chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Churches.

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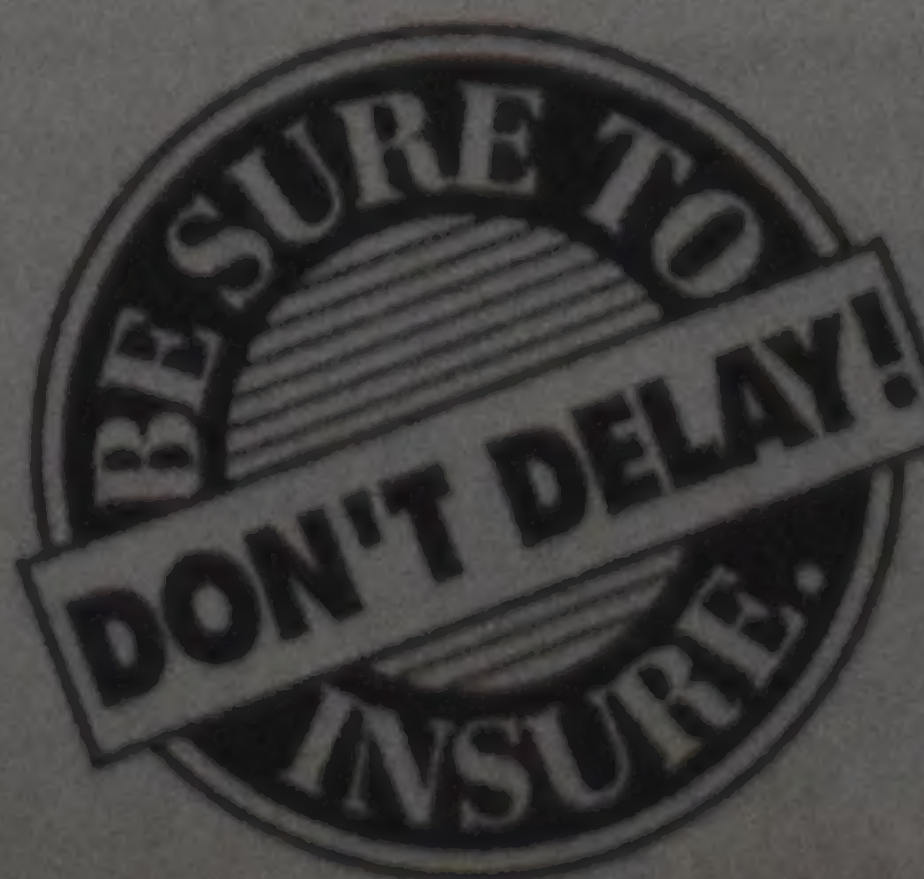


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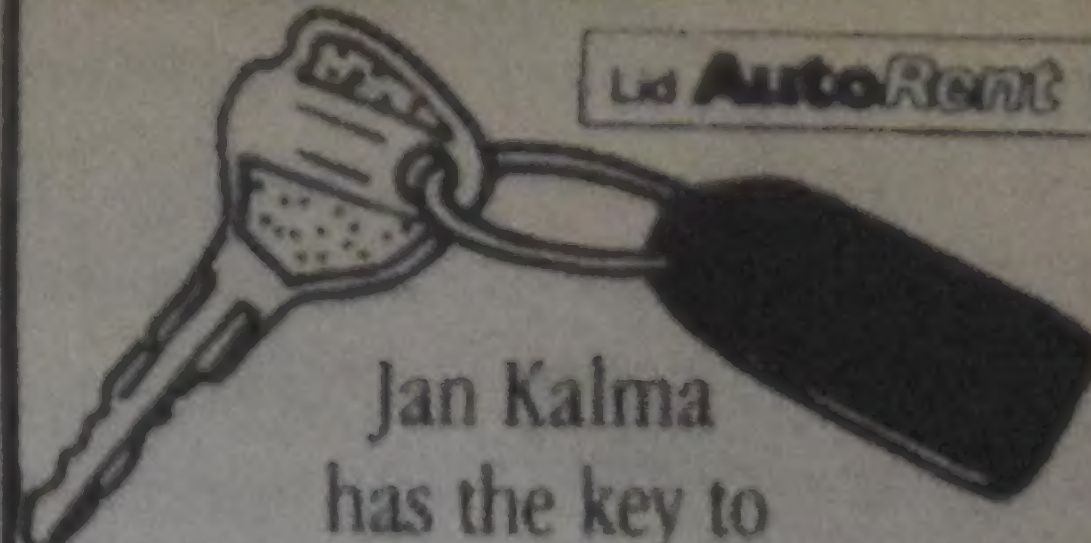
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Helping refugees is good for the soul...and it makes for a good case in heaven

I don't know what it's like to be a refugee. I have never been dispossessed, never had my life threatened, never had to flee famine or persecution.

I know what it's like to be an immigrant. I was one at age 15. But that was more an adventure than an act of desperation. I know what it's like to go through a war. I was six when German soldiers invaded our town, and 11 when they left. We had to endure the scarcity of goods and food that went with the Occupation, but as civilians we were not in danger of being abused or threatened by the well-disciplined garrison that was housed in the local Catholic school complex. I have never been separated from my immediate family for any great length of time, either.

So, in spite of the experience of war and immigration, I dare say that I have not undergone the kind of trauma that refugees often undergo. Refugees are people who have been forced to flee a country, leave everything they love behind (sometimes that means leaving loved ones too) without the assurance of finding their "place" in another country. In fact, refugees most often end up in a limbo of "non status." It must be extremely difficult to be a refugee in the jungle of bureaucracy. Somebody once defined purgatory as a place that is not as bad as hell and not as good as heaven. Perhaps the same could be said for life as a refugee.

The discipline of service

Although I do not know what it is like to be a refugee, one thing I can say, I do know what it is like to help refugees. And there is nothing on earth that surpasses it in terms of satisfaction. To be instrumental in bringing people from a no-place, or a place where they do not belong, to a place where they can start life anew to become productive, find stability, take root, take part, serve, is greatly rewarding.

Helping others is such an essential task for a society that is growing fat and lazy. Being part of a consumer society deprives us of the discipline of service. We are surrounded by invitations to focus only on ourselves. Several churches have recognized this, perhaps subconsciously, because almost all of the private sponsorships of refugees are done by churches. Yet the number of churches that *could* be sponsoring refugees is immensely greater than the number that do. Unless these churches are preoccupied with other forms of service, one cannot conclude that churches are making the best use of opportunities to discipline the Body.

A tale of two sisters

It's easy to forget about refugees, of course. In spite of their great need, which no doubt cries out loudly to heaven, their cry cannot be easily heard. Some are too weak to cry. Then there is the feeling of helplessness that besets us while watching huge numbers of skin-over-bone creatures somewhere in Africa, or whichever continent where people make a habit of starving to death. It's such a hopeless situation. Why should anyone try to rescue a few of them?

Sister Pauline of Rome does not think that way, apparently. She and another Dutch nun are actively helping 20 Ethiopian young men make it through their years of waiting for a sponsorship by arranging for them to work on a small farm just outside Rome. She talked to me on the phone the other day, in Dutch. She was so happy that our church had agreed to sponsor two of "her" young men.

She wondered, however, if something could be done for an emergency case. It involved the Ethiopian ambassador to Sudan and his family. He apparently had to flee the country after the latest revolution. What made it an emergency for the sister was the fact that a family was involved, not that the man was a high-ranking official. Italy is not well set up for refugees and especially not for refugee families, she said. Refugee living conditions are often very grim. I told the sister to send the information to CRWRC in Burlington, Ont., and that CRWRC could contact our church.

I have never met Sister Pauline but I am sure that she is a remarkable woman. And I am sure that she understands the importance of helping people who are without a country.

In a sense all Christians should be able to identify very well with such refugees. After all, no matter how well established we are in our little corner of the globe, with all the rights and privileges that come with being a citizen of Canada or the U.S., we too are refugees. We are refugees because we are not really at home in our own country. We are looking for a better country — a heavenly one.

Hard evidence

The irony of it all is that, unless we use our stay on earth to help others, we will never make it to that other country. I know, I know; this seems to fly in the face of Reformed doctrine which says that we are saved by grace not by good works. But how about looking at "good works" as the best kind of circumstantial evidence there is that the grace of God is working in us. The evidence is apparently sound enough to be used by Jesus at the end of time (see Matt. 25).

Think of it — some day perhaps the majority of North Americans, of which the majority consider themselves Christians, will finally experience what it is like to be homeless and without a country. The unfortunate part is that they will be eternal refugees.

And if they ask for an explanation, they will be given a very simple one: "For I was a refugee and you did not sponsor me."

BW

For an update on Canada's refugee policy, please see Bert Witvoet's story on p. 15.

Letters / News

Old eyes can't read C.C.

I am really pleased with the September article in *Calvinist Contact* called "Do you believe the Holy Spirit is still active today?" I even enjoy the "Pressreview" articles by Carl Tuyl, and read them from A to Z. I think C.C. is very good lately. But it is printed on grey paper which is hard for older people to read.

May I just put a question before you? I like to think I do this in name of a lot of older people with bad eyesight. Would you please change the fine print for a larger one? Some of it is very small. Sometimes [the biographical information at the end of articles] is just the name and occupation of a writer. Other times it tells a little more.

Mrs. H.A. Boulogne
White Rock, B.C.

Mrs. H. DeHaan
Aylmer, Ont.

Response:

Two readers have written on behalf of older readers whose eyesight is failing. We can understand that this creates special problems. There is not much we can do about the colour of the paper because newsprint paper is simply the colour that it is. It would be too expensive and environmentally unwise to use white book paper. As for the size of print, the reader from Aylmer is talking about the small print used for biographical information at the end of an article. The print is three points smaller than the print used for articles. Perhaps we can do something here. In future issues we will try using a larger type for biographical information.

Ed.

Weekly puzzle by Virginia B. Hopewell

ACROSS

1 — lively!
5 Cicatrix
9 Adjust
14 Scorch
15 Drink to excess
16 Old-womanish
17 Sol's predecessor
18 Stock place
19 Addresses
20 Rubbed down
22 Ophelia's beloved
23 Milton or Shakespeare
24 Destiny
25 Go up
28 Using a bike
32 Item for 18A
33 Stigma
34 Bireme propeller
35 —Japanese
36 Publish
37 Division word
38 Previous to
39 "— we all?"
40 Opera solos
41 Apprentices
43 Reefs
44 "The — that touch liquor..."
45 Pinto or lima
46 Takes care of horses
49 Meetings
53 Water wheel
54 Whip mark
55 Applaud
56 In any way
57 Wheel holder
58 Vowel sequence
59 Some souses
60 Russ. veto
61 Attic

DOWN

1 Con game
2 Companion of Artemis
3 Corn units
4 Ariel's master
5 Performed
6 Celestial body
7 Indulged in me-tooism
8 Actor Harrison
9 Drum sound
10 Glossy paint
11 Window part
12 Actress Sommer
13 Try
21 First-class
22 Contraction
24 Fencing movement
25 Something of value
26 Bake eggs
27 City of Crete
28 Careful effort
29 Ancient Aegean region
30 Of birth
31 12 dozen
33 Captures in a way
36 Gets ready (for)
37 Sardonic
39 Dogs and cats
40 Exclamations of surprise
42 Panay port
43 Sonnet part
45 Prettiest girl at a party
46 Nibble
47 Fr. entree
48 Alg. port
49 Sensuous
50 Butterine
51 Artless one
52 Detect
54 Pallid

14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61

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Last week's puzzle

GRETA AMPS PUSH
LOTUS LILT ANTE
IVANS OMAR ITEM
BELIEVEITORNOT
CRI EKES
EMS TRODDEN PJS
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ICANNOTTELLALIE
LOTTOTEA RACE
ENE REVOLTS RED
USNA HID
TOTELLTHETRUTH
PINT ALIA CANOE
ETTE CENT OPINE
POOR EYES METED

Did you know...?

...that Canada's biggest drug problem involves not alcohol or cocaine but tobacco?

About 35,000 people die each year in Canada as a result of smoking or chewing tobacco — 5,000 of those from second-hand smoke! In comparison, fewer than 10 die from marijuana use, about 200 from cocaine consumption, some 400 from morphine use and 12,500 from abuse of alcohol.

(Source: a 1985 report by MP Lynn McDonald).

BEYOND BELIEF

YOU AND YOUR BUNCH HAVE REDUCED CHRISTIANITY TO A SUBCULTURE AND YOU EQUATE RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH PARTICIPATION IN THAT SUBCULTURE — LOOKING A CERTAIN WAY, SINGING CERTAIN SONGS

YOU HAVE TO MAKE ROOM FOR DIFFERENCES. CHRISTIANS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE CLONES OF ONE ANOTHER.

SO WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

We're fiddling while Rome burns

Kids go on a rampage through a shopping centre, gangs of young people ruin property at the Canadian National Exhibition, school boards have to take special measures to try to limit violence in the school and schoolyards, even schoolbuses. And we have the nerve to sit here and tear apart a church family and families in the church over some doctrinal disagreement and real or perceived differences in interpreting a few Bible passages.

Do you know that Islam is growing by leaps and bounds all over the world and that Muslims are dreaming of covering the world with their message within a few decades? If you thought communism was hard on the churches, you should see what the followers of Mohammed do to Christians; and we sit and argue.

Don't tell me that I am simplifying things. I am as concerned about various issues as the next thinking church member, but I will not leave. I could cry when I think of all the churches of the Reformed persuasion who [band together] in little bunches, disliking and distrusting each other heartily, deathly afraid to mix lest they become "contaminated." And we are trying to reach the "world" for Christ?

I am glad that God took a hand in Russia because most of his soldiers on earth were too busy fighting among themselves to be of any help. And we sit here and argue. God help us!

Anne J. VanWyngaarden
Wellandport, Ont

Squash makes a better pumpkin pie

GUELPH, Ont. (Canadian Scene) — Squash pie may not sound mouth-watering, but taste tests at the University of Guelph indicate it beats pumpkin pie by a mile.

Horticultural science technicians Mary Kay Keenan and Marnie Slavik conducted the tests recently with seven pies they'd baked using six different kinds of squash and one popular pumpkin variety grown at the university's Cambridge Research Station.

Biologically, the squash and the pumpkins come from the same family, but consumers see them as distinctly different vegetables.

Twenty-five panelists were asked to judge the fare on the basis of texture and consistency, flavour and visual appeal. The winner, according to the panel, was a banana squash called Northrup King developed by the Northrup King Seed Co.

News digest

BURNABY, B.C. (Canadian Scene) — When Oakalla Prison opened in 1914 in the Vancouver suburb of Burnaby it was one of Canada's most advanced prison farms. The grassy slopes overlooking Deer Lake with the view of the mountains beyond provided a beautiful natural setting for raising cattle and pigs. The inmates grew much of the produce that was used to feed the prison population.

Since then it has been British Columbia's main provincial jail, housing some of Canada's most notorious prison inmates. This summer Oakalla's doors closed forever. The 400 prisoners had been moved into four smaller correctional centres with computerized locks and pink and grey walls.

Oakalla had become a symbol of a harsher era with punishment which included prisoners placed in cold and damp isolation cells built beneath an old cow barn and fed only bread and water.

The main prison building that had once been thought so up-to-date was viewed as medieval with its layers of grim cells all laid out in rows encased in steel mesh. In marked contrast with the beautiful setting, the buildings were crumbling and no longer met the standards set by the provincial government for incarceration and behaviour modification.

The use of the prison property as a farm had long ago been abandoned. No longer did prisoners help tend a team of huge Clydesdale horses used to pull a wagon in the annual Pacific National Exhibition Parade. Inmates hadn't helped make car license plates for 25 years and jail time had become just time spent behind bars.

In the final days of the old prison, members of the public are being allowed to tour the grounds and buildings before they are torn down this fall. The 70-hectare site will be turned into townhouses with "a million-dollar view."

DAKAR, Senegal (D.B., UNESCO) — Basic education remains a widespread problem in Africa, particularly for young girls, women and rural populations. Such were the conclusions of MINEDAF VI, a regional conference on education held in July. In Burkina Faso, for example, the dropout rate from primary school is 80 per cent. MINEDAF emphasized the need to improve school attendance and to cut the illiteracy rate, and all regional representatives agreed that greater co-operation between nations and with international agencies was needed. — Diomansi Bombote.

Media/Finance

New study finds TV scandals have increased accountability of religious broadcasters

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (EP) — The widely-reported televangelism scandals of recent years have had an unexpected impact on the accountability of religious broadcasters, according to Dr. Quentin J. Schultze, author of *Televangelism and American Culture: The Business of Popular Religion*. In a recent study, Schultze found that the scandals have significantly increased accountability among mainstream evangelical broadcasters, but not among charismatic and Pentecostal ones.

Schultze, professor of communication arts and sciences at Calvin College, wrote as a viewer/listener to 30 of the largest TV ministries and 20 national radio ministries requesting financial and doctrinal statements.

The mailing duplicated part of a study he conducted before the Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart scandals of the late 1980s. At that time Schultze received financial statements from only nine per cent of the religious broadcasters, and doctrinal statements from even fewer.

But in the latest study, Schultze discovered far greater openness to public scrutiny of a ministry's financial condition and theological stance. Half of the TV ministries and 40 per cent of the radio ministries provided financial statements upon request. Response was nearly the same for doctrinal statements.

The vast majority of broadcast ministries which failed to supply financial and doctrinal information were Pentecostal and charismatic, rather than mainstream evangelicals such as Billy Graham and Charles Stanley. They included Ernest Angley, Kenneth Copeland, W.V. Grant, Marilyn Hickey, Fred Price, Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, Robert Tilton and

Paul and Jan Crouch of Trinity Broadcasting Network.

Pat Robertson's CBN, which has associated itself with the charismatic renewal movement, was the major exception.

Schultze speculates that Pentecostal and charismatic broadcast ministries provide less public disclosure for two reasons. First, they feel free to "move with the Holy Spirit" instead of following a carefully crafted ministry plan. Second, they tend to view their ministries more as a daily act of faith than a business, even though religious broadcasting can be enormously expensive.

As Schultze documents in *Televangelism and American Culture*, televangelism is big business, and Pentecostal and charismatics are among the most popular TV preachers. They represent at least four of the 10 highest-rated "devotional" broadcasts, according to the Nielsen Station Index (Roberts, Copeland, Swaggart and Price).

Generally speaking, broadcast ministries that were members of National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) or the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) were more accountable than their non-member counterparts. Schultze found that 87 per cent of ECFA members and 79 per cent of NRB-EFICOM members provided financial statements.

Schultze concludes that greater public accountability is good for religious broadcasting and the public. However, he recommends greater charismatic and Pentecostal participation in organizations such as NRB and ECFA, warning that otherwise there is the likely spectre of more scandals that will further affect the public's attitude toward religious broadcasting.

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Your mortgage and your money

The largest liability that most Canadians take on is the mortgage on their home. Here are common questions and answers on mortgages that I hear from people with whom I talk.

"How is a mortgage different from a loan?"

The dictionary defines a mortgage as a conditional conveyance of property as security for a loan. In other words, a mortgage is merely a way of providing collateral for borrowed money. All things considered, a mortgage in the way that we refer to it is nothing more than a way to borrow money.

"What is the difference between 'term' and 'amortization'?"

Term refers to the length of time for which the interest rate on the mortgage is fixed. Mortgages can be acquired with floating rates, for six months, or with one- to seven-year terms. A few decades ago, it was possible to take out a mortgage for both a 25-year term and a 25-year amortization. Amortization refers to the period of time over which the loan (mortgage) is paid off. The amount of the payment is based on the interest rate and the amortization period.

The payment itself is made up of both interest and principle. The principle component of the payment reduces the actual amount owing each month. In the early years of making mortgage payments, the principle component of the payment is very small, while in the later years it becomes very large.

More means less

Look at the effect of the interest rate and amortization on the actual payment. Using \$100,000 as the amount borrowed with a 12.5 per cent rate and a 25-year amortization results in a \$1,067.03 per month payment. In amortizing the mortgage over 15 years the payment goes to \$1,212.19 per month. In paying \$145.16 per month more, the mortgage is retired 10 years sooner. It is interesting to do some additional arithmetic. Over the 25-year amortization period, the total of all of the payments is \$320,109. Over the 15-year amortization the total of all the payments is \$218,194. By shortening the amortization period, the borrower is required to pay \$145 more per month but ends up paying a total of \$101,915 less.

So of course people ask, "Should I pay off my mortgage as quickly as possible?" Often in the same breath this question will be followed by, "Should I pay off my mortgage or contribute to an RRSP?" The real question to be answered in both cases is, "What provides the most financial advantage, paying off the mortgage or doing something else with the same money?"

In looking at the RRSP versus mortgage reduction decision it boils down to several considerations. If the mortgage rate you pay and the rate you receive on the RRSP are the same, then the tax aspect needs to be considered. For example if you pay 12 per cent on one hand (your mortgage interest) and receive 12 per cent on the other (RRSP returns), both are after tax. If you pay down the mortgage by \$5,000, then you would not be paying 12 per cent on that amount. If you add \$5,000 to your RRSP you would receive 12 per cent on this additional amount. What the RRSP contribution provides is a tax deduction against other income. So if the RRSP rate of return equals the interest cost on the mortgage, and the RRSP provides a further benefit of tax saving, then it becomes clear that the RRSP has some advantages. At a 40 per cent marginal tax rate, a \$5,000 contribution will result in a \$2,000 tax saving.

What about investments?

One way of doing both is to make the maximum RRSP contribution and use the tax savings to reduce the principle outstanding on the mortgage.

Other people have asked, "Should I use the equity in my home to secure a loan for investment purposes?" That really depends on the cost of the money borrowed and the returns realized on the investment. One important tax aspect of taking out a mortgage and investing the proceeds is that the interest portion of the mortgage payment becomes tax deductible. Imagine that: tax deductible mortgage payments.

In many cases, there are Canadians who have a mortgage on their home and also have investments. For example, take an investor who owes \$100,000 on his or her home (mortgaged) and at the same time has mutual funds totalling \$100,000. The mortgage on the home has nothing to do with the mutual fund investment.

Investors in such a case could sell off their investments to pay off the loan. Then they could take out a mortgage on their home for \$100,000 and replace the mutual funds. They end up the same as when they started, except for one important difference. The \$12,000 interest cost on their mortgage payments becomes a tax deduction. At the highest tax bracket this saves them \$5,520 per year.

Paying special attention to your biggest financial considerations can pay off.

Leonard Bick is a financial planner from Ancaster, Ontario.

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Cinema/Arts

Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

The Fisher King

Rated R

Stars Robin Williams, Jeff Bridges, Amanda Plummer, Mercedes Ruehl
Directed by Terry Gilliam

The Fisher King has a couple of big name stars but is not a typical Hollywood movie. In fact, it's quite atypical, despite director Terry Gilliam's statement that this was his "sell-out" film (as in "selling-out to Hollywood").

Gilliam (whose original claim to fame came as one of the off-the-wall wits of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*) and *The Fisher King's* bankable stars, Williams and Bridges, must be the reasons a major studio decided to back this story.

This is a gritty, sometimes funny, sometimes painful, sometimes repulsive, sometimes poignant film about *grace*. Gilliam perhaps considers it a "sell-out" because it does concede to romantic love in a sub-plot — however whacky that love story may be — and it ends happily. But *grace* is like that.

Glib king of talk

Jack Lucas (Jeff Bridges) is a talk-radio DJ in the slick and glib mold. He walks the edge of propriety both on the air and off.

One ordinary day a lonely repeat-caller, a shy loser at love, is brushed off with some flippant remarks. Lucas assures him that the rich Yuppies are the cause of his problems. On the evening news Lucas finds out that upon hearing those remarks, the man went into an upscale store and opened fire with a shotgun on the customers. The toll: six dead, and then a seventh — the man's own suicide.

At the news, Lucas' studied facade — and his world — begins to fall apart. He retreats into booze, loses his perspective, his job and his courage. He sees himself as the real murderer.

In a near stupor one night, Jack ties cement blocks to his feet and is about to take his own life by diving into New York's East River when he is jumped by some hoods who see it as their duty to rid the city of its homeless "scum." Jack is saved by an apparent nut-case going by the name of Perry.

Perry takes Jack to his underground boiler-room home and confides a secret to him: Perry is a modern-day "fisher king," a searcher for the Holy Grail (Christ's Last Supper chalice); and he's convinced it resides on a shelf in the library of a reclusive New York billionaire. They've only to go and get it.

Searching for the 'Holy Grail'

Jack soon learns that Perry was, until that mass murder which claimed his wife as a victim, an English professor named Henry Sagen. And Sagen literally lost his mind when his wife's brains were blown out a few feet from him.

But this film is not some exploitive thriller with a few bizarre psychological twists. Perry describes the Holy Grail as a symbol of divine grace. What he's really looking for is that grace — which will be the balm for his agony — and which, we viewers see, must be administered by a fellow human being acting as its agent ("I was sick and you visited me, naked and you clothed me..."). But the forces allied against the Grail are staggering — and very real to Perry, though it takes Jack a long time to recognize them.

The almost whimsical irony here is that Jack, for all his own torment and self-inflicted misery, becomes an unwitting (and extremely reluctant) agent of grace, turning his own life around in the process.

It should be mentioned that the two leading women in the film (each played superbly, by Mercedes Ruehl and Amanda Plummer) are not just romantic "fillers" to off-set the male leads, as is so often the case. While the film does focus most directly on the two men, the women are integral to the story and are each strong characters, if in entirely different ways.

The Fisher King is the kind of film that can spark both lively debate and careful introspection. It is rated "R" because of rather frequent use of a particular vulgar word, and because it contains a scene in which Perry undresses and prances exuberant and naked in the moonlight in Central Park. The nudity is totally inoffensive; the vulgarity, while probably appropriate to the characters, seems a little overdone.

A good film should have enough depth and nuance to haunt you for a while after you see it, like a great piece of music that replays itself in your head and reveals things you hadn't noticed before. This one qualifies.

Tour of Milne celebrates a Canadian artist



(Canadian Scene) — One of the major achievements of a touring art exhibition which opened Sept. 29 is that it calls to wide public attention the work of an artist who, for too long, has lived in the shadow of his celebrated contemporaries, The Group of Seven.

An exhibition of 155 oil paintings, watercolours and prints by David Milne (1882-1953) reveals the work of an artist of unique vision. The Milne show opened at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ont., and is being displayed there until Dec. 1. The next stop on the tour is the Vancouver Art Gallery, Jan. 22 to March 30, 1992. The exhibition will then

move to its final location, the National Gallery of Canada where it will stay from July 1 to Sept. 7, 1992.

The son of Scottish immigrants, Milne was born in Paisley, Ont., in 1882. He studied at the Art Students League in New York and remained in the United States, where he achieved modest reputation, until 1918. In that year he returned to Canada and enlisted as an official Canadian war artist, painting scenes of camp life in England and the devastation of battle in France.

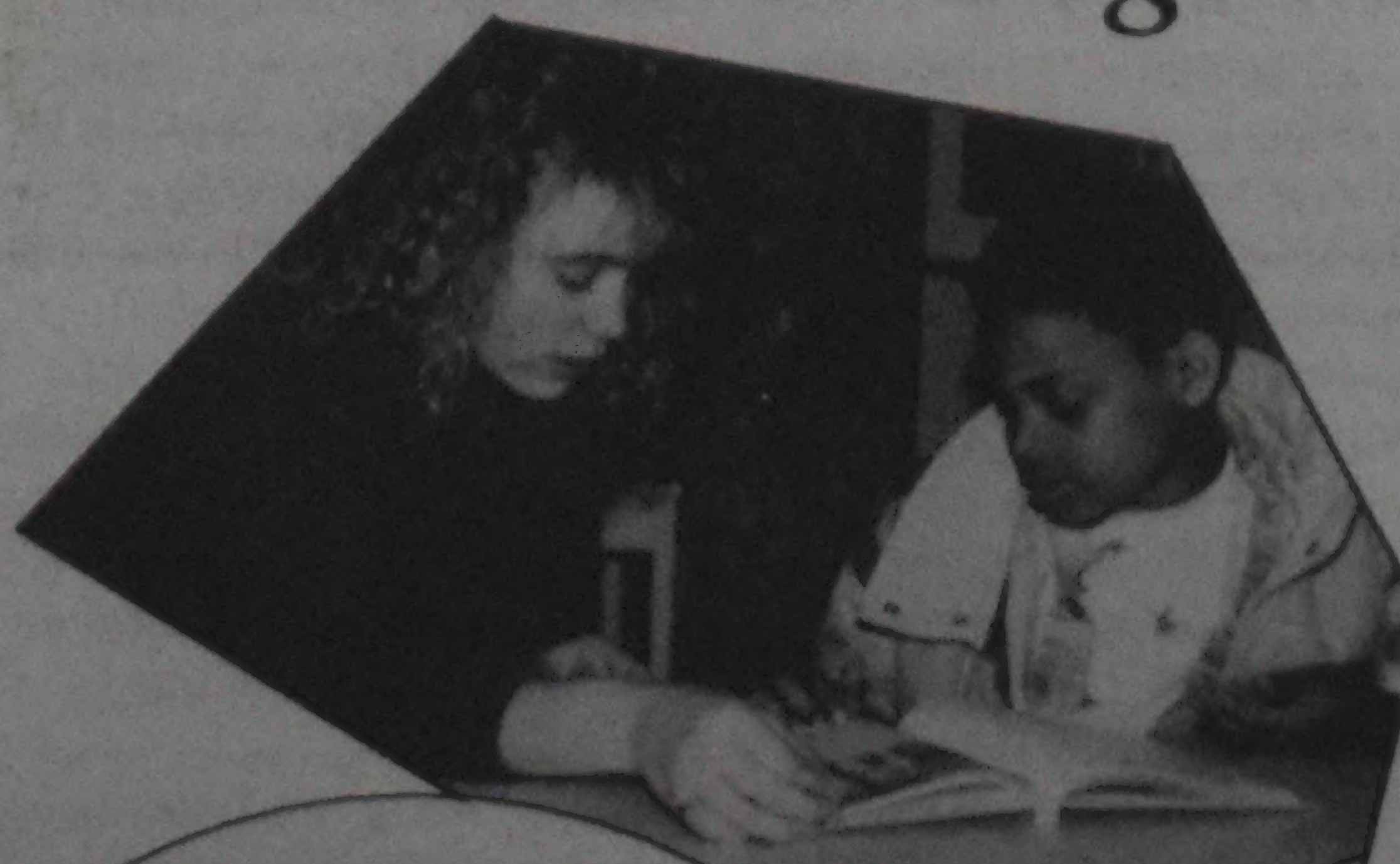
After the war Milne returned to the United States and then in 1929 came back to Canada to live permanently. It wasn't until 1935 that he began to

achieve a measure of financial security, through the help of Douglas Duncan, an art dealer who was dedicated to bringing the work of talented Canadian artists to the attention of collectors.

Milne died in 1953. According to his biographer, David P. Silcox, Milne "endowed the simplest subjects — houses, barns, flowers, trees — with majestic stature," and has been given the highest acclaim by succeeding generations of artists.

The exhibition shows Milne's work from his student days in New York to his creative maturity in rural Ontario in the 1940s and 1950s.

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Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Churches start inner-city ministry in Oshawa

Robert Vander Vennen

OSHAWA, Ont. — Churches are starting to stake a claim for Christ in a seamy downtown section of Oshawa known for drugs, sex and booze.

Oshawa Community Ministry, Gate 3:16, opened in December in a store front on King Street two blocks away from City Hall. It's a diaconal ministry which invites people to drop in off the streets for coffee, conversation, Bible study and encouragement.

George Witvoet, one of two half-time co-ordinators who are the only paid staff members, says the ministry started when Zion Chr. Ref. Church of Oshawa celebrated its 25th anniversary in thankfulness to God for his faithfulness. The church's pastor, Dr. Henry Wildeboer, invited local pastors to a regular brown-bag lunch and

Bible study at Zion church.

From that idea of a co-operative counselling ministry was born.

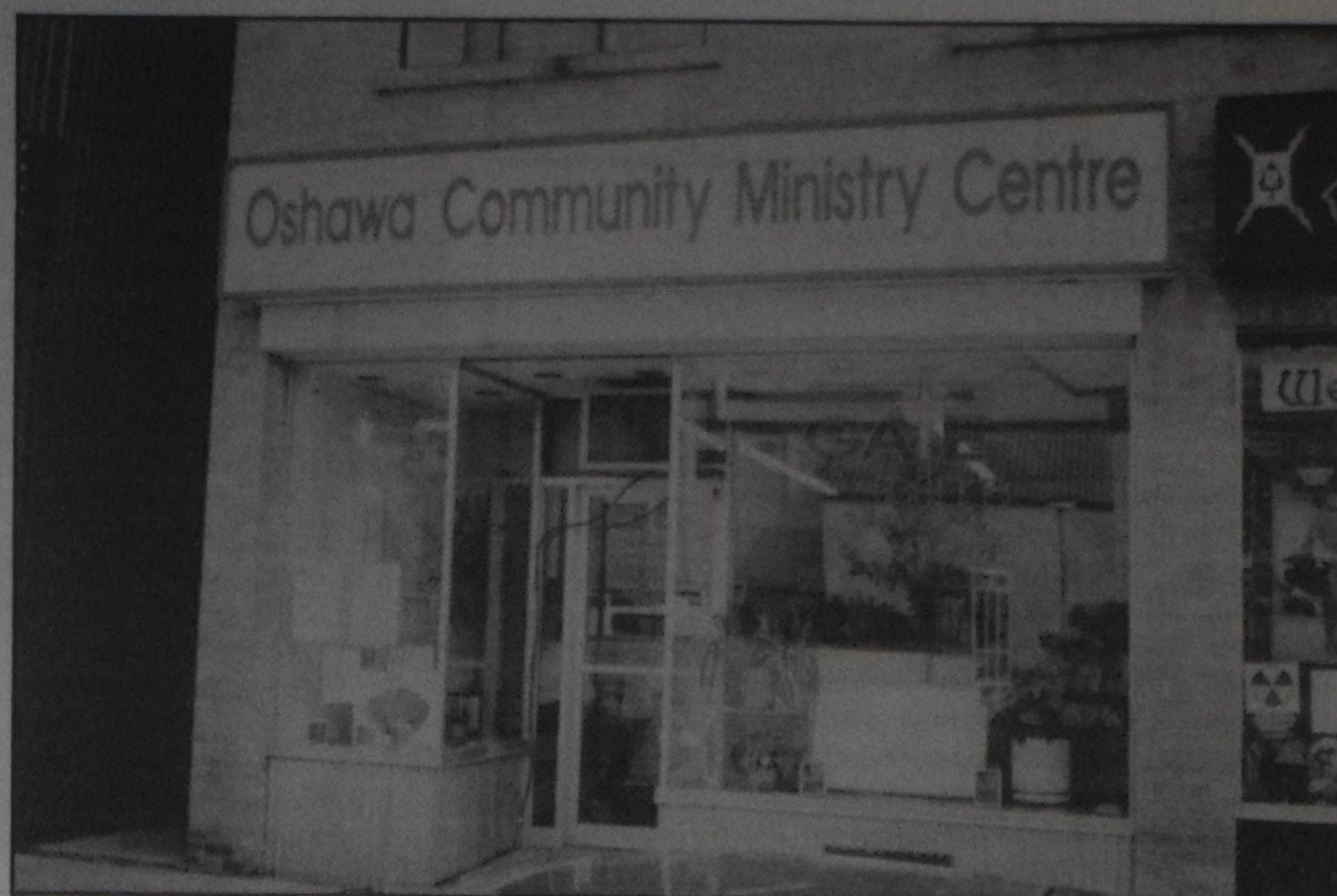
At first a location in a shopping mall was sought, but that didn't work out and God pressed them to a store-front downtown, says Witvoet. They are a few steps from St. Vincent's soup kitchen, which opened a year ago, and across the street from a Salvation Army Thrift Store.

From an early sweeping vision of meeting all needs, the realities have shown that some people who walk through the door need more than the trained volunteers can supply. People are now referred for psychotherapy to Herman VandenBerge, a professional counsellor on the staff at Zion Church, and to Tina Lush for counselling on substance abuse.

Either Witvoet or Mabel Dittrick, the other co-ordinator, is on duty whenever Gate 3:16 is open, which is Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dittrick is a member of St. John's Anglican Church and is an unordained hospital chaplain. One or more trained volunteers are always on duty also.

Enter the gate to life

The name Gate 3:16 comes from the fact that the General Motors plant is the dominant employer in town, and everyone working there must enter through one numbered



Gate 3:16, an icebreaker in Oshawa.

Photos by Robert VanderVennen.

gate or another. The 3:16 comes from John 3:16, conveying the idea that Jesus is the gate all must enter to reach eternal life.

Gate 3:16 is a welcoming drop-in place where people down on their luck, as they might put it, receive encouragement and strength and are helped to develop a way of life rooted in Christ. As client Ray McGee says, "I think of Gate 3:16 as a great Canadian icebreaker going where ordinary ships can't go. It is breaking the ice or bringing down the barriers between the people they are working with

and people in churches and in the community. They are working in a quiet and understanding way, taking time to listen to all who pass through their door."

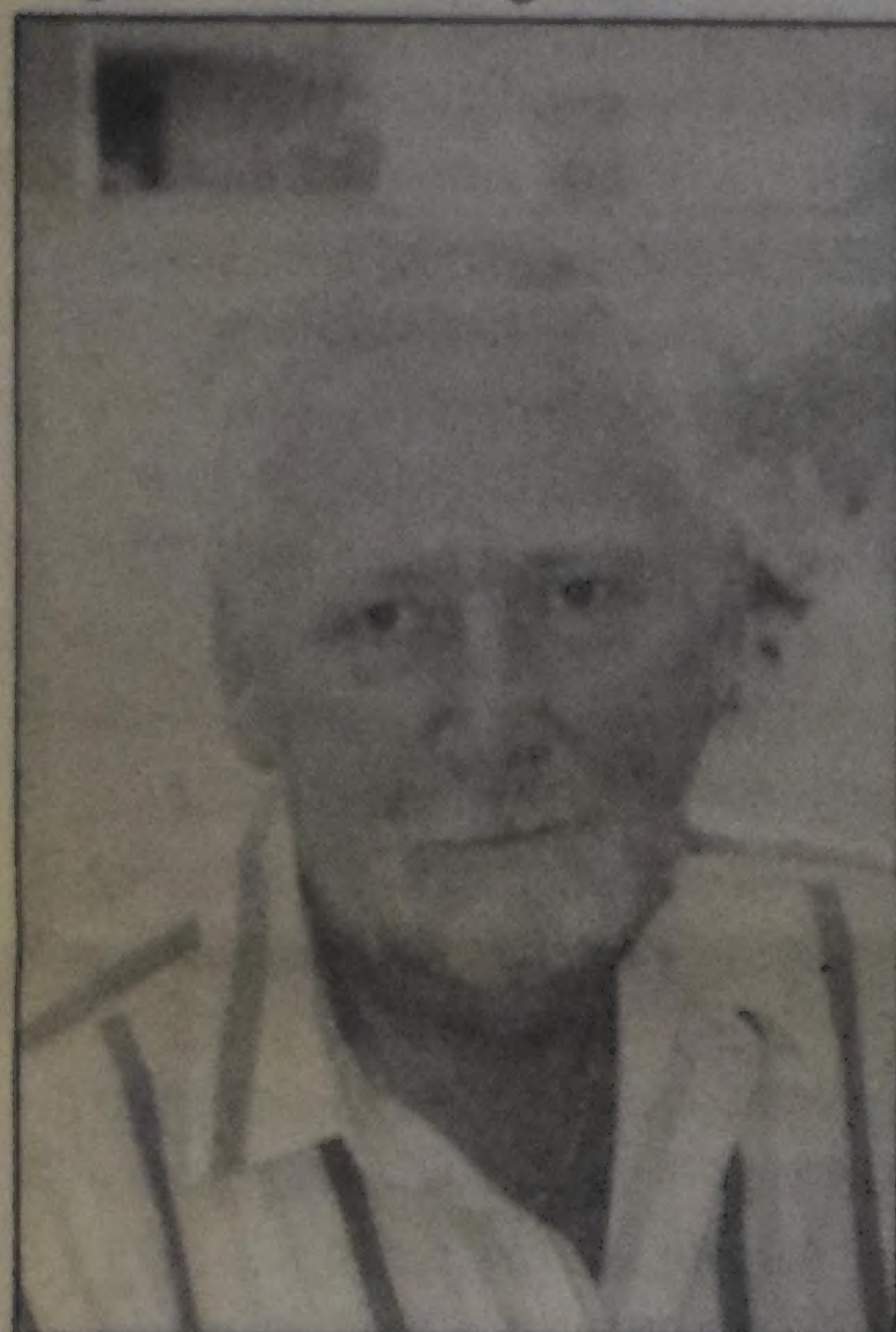
Everything you need

Gate 3:16 has a lending library of books, tapes and videos. It has a small food bank. After 3 p.m. it gives out free tickets to a dinner at St. Vincent's, where people can sit down at a table and be served a good meal. People who need clothing are referred across the street to the Salvation Army.

Four years ago Witvoet, in

his 50s, sold his hairdressing business and began to work for Zion church and the local Christian school. His business experience has taught him how to listen and has given him invaluable business connections in Oshawa. He sees himself as a professional deacon and is a consultant to deacons in their ministries.

At present, 21 churches and their members support Gate 3:16 with money, prayers and volunteers. Salem Christian Counselling Services provides some funds too. Oshawa's inner-city rescue mission is a genuinely ecumenical effort.



George Witvoet, Gate 3:16 coordinator

Orthodox and Protestant churches face off in Bulgaria

Bill Fledderus, with files from Barbara Baker (NNI)

SOFIA, Bulgaria —

Protestant groups are still considered "cults" by the largest religious organization in post-communist Bulgarian society, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Church, which claimed 65 per cent of the population in 1944, may still have the allegiance of 40 per cent, according to Christian sources. Bulgaria has an estimated population of nine million and is about twice the size of Nova Scotia.

Officially, the Orthodox Church opposes all Christian traditions apart from its own. The term "evangelicals," for example, is synonymous with "heretics" in the minds of the faithful. Most non-Orthodox Christians are viewed with suspicion, if not resentment.

The Orthodox church traces its roots back to the official introduction of Christianity into Bulgaria in the ninth century by the brother apostles Cyril and Methodius. They

invented the first Slavic alphabet, known as the cyrillic alphabet, in order to translate the Bible.

Bulgarian society owes a debt to the Orthodox church not only for its alphabet, but also for its strong monastic tradition which served as a repository for Bulgarian culture and the Christian faith during five cruel centuries of Ottoman rule.

It is little wonder the Orthodox church enjoyed a privileged "state church" status before the communist take-over in 1945, and that it has at least the nominal allegiance of many Bulgarians.

Some evangelicals are worried that the country's new constitution, which states that the "traditional religion of Bulgaria is the Eastern Orthodox Church," could lead to continuing discrimination against them.

Protestants a small minority

Though all Protestant denominations are under Bulgarian leadership, usually

structured in a highly centralized fashion, almost none of the Protestant pastors have received any formal Bible or theological training.

Conservative estimates show the number of evangelical believers total no higher than 55,000 — even after reportedly doubling their numbers in the last 12 months. Compare this to an estimated 60,000 Roman Catholics and 1.5 million Muslims.

Many of the Muslims heritage speak Turkish and some are being converted to Christianity, especially in southern and eastern Bulgaria. Several ethnically Turkish congregations have been founded.

On a national average, 80 to 90 per cent of Bulgaria's Protestants would identify themselves as Pentecostals, which most define by linking assurance of salvation with the gift of speaking in tongues.

Of the Protestant churches which registered with the government last November, the Pentecostal Union is the largest denomination, with

25,000 members in 120 churches.

The Church of God is the fastest growing, with 15,000 in 83 churches. Others include Congregational, Baptist, Methodist and Brethren groups.

The Dunovists, a Bulgarian sect from the 1930s with a Theosophical theology, also have legal status, as do the Seventh Day Adventists and the Mormon church.

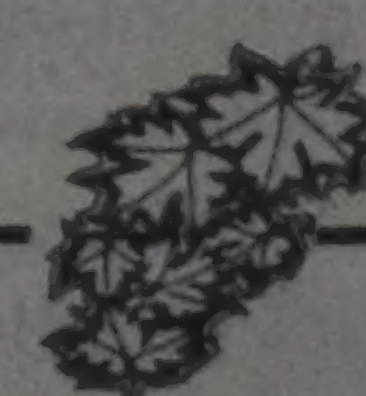
Need to co-operate, show love

Many Bulgarian Protestants are beginning to see the need for interdenominational co-operation. So far, despite their minority status, Bulgaria's Protestant churches have been showing a tendency towards legalism and denominationalism, according to some local believers.

Evangelicals are, however, united in considering themselves the leaders in changing attitudes toward Bulgaria's 500,000 gypsies, who have taken the brunt of centuries of ethnic prejudice.

"This nation has always oppressed the gypsies," said one Sofia believer. "It was not something the communists started. There is just an ethnic hatred against them."

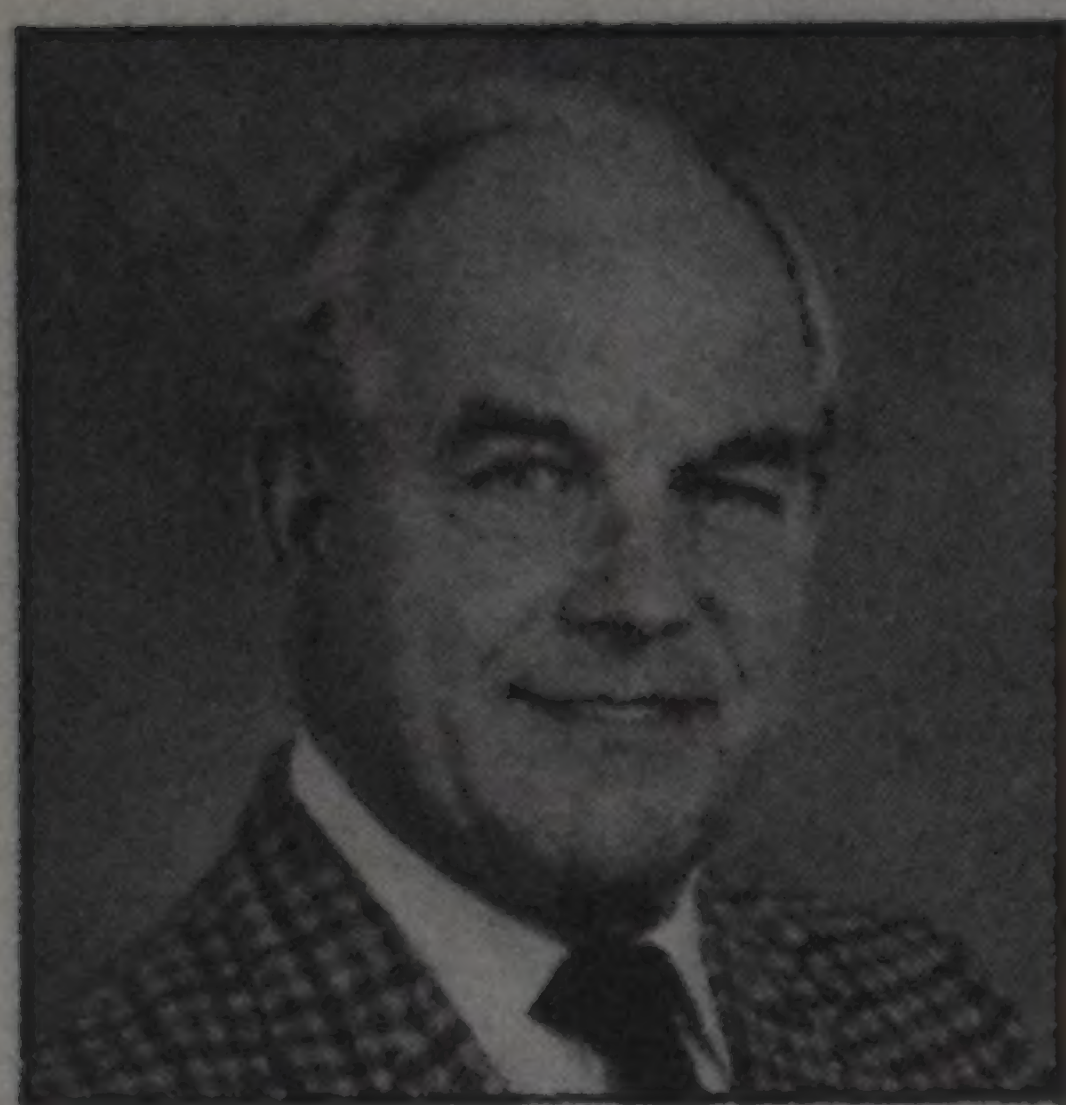
Protestants have shown God's love to the gypsies in ways as simple as shaking their hands and kissing them, actions which amazed the gypsies. The previously mentioned believer said that some "have begun to open their hearts to Jesus."



This week's layout
and design by
Marguerite Witvoet



Church



Canadian Church Scene

Jacob Kuntz

Back to the Soviet Union

Even though the media never says much about the effect which the overthrow of the communist rule in the Soviet Union can have for the church of Christ, Christians see new possibilities for the Gospel in that country. One indication of the new opportunities in the U.S.S.R. is the fact that the Salvation Army, banned from Russia for years, will make a new start with its ministry there. Under the title "O Boundless Salvation" we read in the *War Cry* of Sept. 21:

"It was the godly ambition of General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, to expand the work of the movement he had created across the world. This was his last injunction to Bramwell Booth, his son and successor. And that expansion, declared Bramwell, included Russia.

"However, Czar Nicholas II, right up to his abdication in 1917, resisted the Salvation Army for religious reasons and kept it out of his domain. Afterward, for but a few all too brief years, the Army ministered in Russia. Then the communists closed down the work.

"Now, three quarters of a century later, in 1991, a team of intrepid Salvation Army pioneers has been dispatched to the Soviet Union to recommence Salvation Army ministries. To reintroduce to the vast Soviet Union a work of

love and ministering in a land of confusion, uncertainty — and religious hunger.

"The Army personnel intend, by God's grace, to recreate among needy and hurting people in the U.S.S.R. a ministry of love and grace, and to tell of the marvellous, life-changing love of Jesus Christ.

"There is astonishing interest among the Russian people in securing Bibles and Gospel literature of all kinds. They do, after all, have a centuries-old Russian Orthodox Christian tradition and there is an astonishing craving among them for spiritual knowledge which can only be fulfilled by faith in Jesus Christ.

"Pray for our workers in Russia, that the Lord will give them strength for their ministries and souls for their labours."

Apology in order?

A new awareness that Canada's Natives have not been treated well by white people has led to apologies on the part of churches for the way in which Native children were "educated" in residential schools that were run by the churches. "Bishop apologizes for schools" is the headline on the front page of the *Anglican Journal* of Sept. 1991. It happened at a meeting with Natives in Vancouver. We quote the following lines:

"After listening for four days to the hurt and anger of Native people who attended Canada's 80 church-run residential schools, Anglican Bishop John Hannen of Caledonia apologized on behalf of his church. 'Where the church has caused you or your community pain and destruction, I ask your forgiveness,' Bishop Hannen said to about 300 Native people attending a conference on Native residential schools, held here this summer.

"Like Roman Catholic and United Church leaders who also apologized at the

conference, the Anglican bishop for northern British Columbia acknowledged that residential schools caused many Native people to lose their identity and sense of self-worth.

"Hundreds of thousands of Native children in Canada, particularly in the West, were taken from their villages and forced to spend nine months of the year at residential schools run by the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United and Baptist churches until the early 1970s.

"Native people at the conference disclosed how they were sexually, emotionally or

physically abused at the strict schools. The federal government financed residential schools with the purpose of assimilating Native people into white culture.

"I feel hurt and shame," said bishop Hannen, 'when I hear people tell their stories where they have experienced the church as an instrument of pain, dis-ease, of stunting growth, of unwholeness, of undermining the identity that God gives to people, of turning people away from God and from reconciliation.'"

In that same issue of *Anglican Journal*, however, several missionaries who at the time were involved in those residential schools express their dismay about the negative tone of the church's apology; they come to the defence of those who gave many years of their lives to "preach the Gospel to the Indians and educate their children" and who (according to one) "were paid next to nothing for their services." In one letter we read:

"All those who ever served in Anglican and other Indian residential schools are outraged and demeaned by the plethora of stories of abuse that were alleged to have taken place, with the implication that anyone associated with the schools was a monster.

"There is evidence that abuse did take place somewhere at some time, as did in boarding facilities in other areas, but never in my experience, nor in the experience of anyone I ever

knew who worked there.

"The people I knew who served in residential schools were decent, dedicated people who gave their lives to serve the Native people.

"With them they willingly shared the loneliness and privation of the wilderness for a pittance in remuneration, while critics like the National Executive Council and others sat in urban comfort and criticized from afar.

"Those who served in the wilderness did the best they

could in extremely trying conditions, and at least they were there when no one else cared."

Jacob Kuntz is a retired pastor living in Kitchener, Ont.

What will Quebec do?

In the Aug. 2 issue of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, Dr. John Redekop wrote a letter "To an American cousin" concerning the future of Canada. He states as his personal opinion "that eventually Quebec will separate from Canada, but not as soon as most Canadians seem to think." In his view, commitment to a free and independent Quebec "has become the new religion." Yet it may still take years, even decades, before Quebec leaves. We quote:

"But I must get back to tell you why I think Quebec won't leave Canada for some years, perhaps even decades. Partly because of Quebec's far-reaching secularization, the people in that province, like most Canadians, are reluctant to undertake a major initiative that will probably cost them dearly in financial terms. Emotionally most Quebecers want to separate. For financial reasons, most hesitate.

"Yes, I did say that I think that eventually Quebec will leave. Let me cite two key reasons. Increasingly, Quebec is developing its own economy.

Partly because of Canada's Free Trade Agreement with your country, Quebec's economic ties with the rest of Canada are weakening. Secondly, most English-speaking Canadians, while wanting to be fair to Quebec, are simply not prepared to give that province any special status. I don't see that attitude changing. At the same time, many Canadians don't care whether Quebec leaves confederation. Public opinion polls suggest that more than 10 per cent actually want Quebec to leave."



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It was Monday night and the sky was black with storm clouds. I was hurrying to meet my team at the bowling alley when I spotted him, standing alone, at the bus stop. The bushy, white mustache and balding head gave him the look of an elderly, over-sized white walrus as he paced in front of the bench. What was he doing there, alone, at this time of night?

He was my neighbour. Although I knew this elderly gentleman only by sight, tonight I felt compelled to stop and speak to him. Our city bus service was not dependable after the evening rush hour, and it was getting dark with the threat of storm. I wheeled my car into the shopping centre parking lot and coasted over to the bus bench.

"Hi, neighbor," I greeted him, for I didn't know his name. He and his wife were private people who, it seemed, did not wish to intrude into the lives of their neighbours and expected the same consideration in return. "Can I give you a lift someplace?" I offered, "You may be all night waiting for a bus here."

He accepted my offer gratefully, swinging his huge frame into my small car. He introduced himself — Oscar Henderson — and explained that his wife, Martha, had been admitted to Baptist Hospital that day. I introduced myself, clarifying, "I'm the one who walks the little black dog with the red sweater in the winter time." He smiled recognition. It always amused me that many of our neighbours knew me, not by face but by the small black cocker spaniel I walked daily.

Mr. Henderson added that Martha had driven herself to the hospital and he had driven the car home. But he didn't see well enough to drive at night. "Martha will be worried," he fretted, "I expected to be there half an hour ago. I must have missed the last bus." He explained that Martha had forgotten a few things she would need overnight and he had volunteered to bring them up on the bus.

"It will only take a few minutes to drop you at the hospital," I said, "It's practically on my way to the bowling alley." When I mentioned bowling, he worried about making me late. "They'll either wait for me or start without me," I assured him. "I can catch up when I get there. We're allowed three make-up frames. I shouldn't be that late."

At the hospital, I dropped him at the door, feeling slightly guilty for having to leave. "Can I pick you up at nine when I'm through bowling?" I offered. But he declined.



Carolyn Brown Copeland

small, inconsequential act of kindness



Photo: courtesy of Carolyn Brown Copeland

It was a small, inconsequential act of kindness I performed that night. The next day I sent Mrs. Henderson a get-well card and dismissed the old couple from my mind. In time, I saw her working in their front yard as I passed with my dog. The surgery, I assumed, was successful. We waved to each other, as neighbours do. Our relationship was much the same as before.

About a year or two later, Mr. Henderson appeared at our door after dark. "I don't know who else to turn to," he confessed, explaining that Martha was back in the hospital. She was to undergo surgery in the morning for lung cancer. "She drove herself to the hospital and I took the bus home. The car is still in the hospital parking lot. I need someone to drive it home. My eyes are so bad I can't see to drive anymore. Not even in the daytime."

My husband, Bud, took the car keys as Mr. Henderson told him where to find the car. By now their little yellow Volkswagen "Bug" was familiar to us. We had no trouble finding it. When it was safely parked in the Hendersons' driveway and the keys returned, Mr. Henderson outdid himself showering us with gratitude and thanksgiving.

"Can we give you a lift to the hospital in the morning?" Bud asked, but Mr. Henderson preferred to remain

independent.

"I can manage the bus system during the day," he said, adding as an afterthought, "but if it wouldn't be too much trouble, I'd appreciate a ride on Sunday." We knew the buses didn't run on Sunday and assured him it would be no trouble at all. A time was arranged to meet. One Sunday afternoon we even spent some time visiting Martha at the hospital.

When Mrs. Henderson's condition improved enough to allow her to return home, we offered to drive Mr. Henderson to the hospital and take them both home, but he would not hear of it.

"We will take a cab," he insisted, "There may be a long wait to check out. You have been too kind already." No amount of persuasion would make him change his mind.

Mrs. Henderson came home a few days before Thanksgiving. What an abysmal Thanksgiving this will be for them, I thought, knowing she would be unable to cook, and probably not even be strong enough to get out for dinner. Finally, I asked, "Would you mind if I brought Thanksgiving plates over for you and Mrs. Henderson? We'll have more than enough." He accepted the offer graciously.

On Thanksgiving Day, we prepared two generous plates full of turkey with all the trimmings. Later, they told us they ate for two days on the food provided.

It was a small, inconsequential Thanksgiving act of kindness. Eventually, Mrs. Henderson regained her strength and we sometimes stopped to chat when we saw them outside in the yard. She seldom neglected to mention our Thanksgiving kindness. They bubbled over with grateful hearts. It was such a joy to help them.

Several years after Mrs. Henderson's surgery — half of one lung had been removed — when she was beginning to feel victorious over cancer, I faced the prospect of surgery. Cancer was suspected. Fear gripped my being. Fear of chronic illness. Fear of cancer. Fear of death.

I didn't know how the Hendersons found out. But Martha became one of my stalwart supporters. For a long time after my surgery, she ministered to me with jars of homemade soup and words of encouragement. She was not afraid to talk about cancer and its consequences, as were many of my closer friends who knew little about the disease. And, having been a cancer victim herself, Martha was very knowledgeable.

Three years have passed and it is Thanksgiving time of the year again. I just called the Hendersons to see if they would share Thanksgiving dinner with us. A verse from Luke 6:38 came to mind: "...Give and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over... For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

And I wonder; in God's eyes, are there any small, inconsequential acts of kindness?

Carolyn Brown Copeland is a free-lance writer in Phoenix, Arizona.

Was it a small, inconsequential act of kindness she performed? I didn't think so. To me, it was a lifeline.



Love Feast

I scatter seed
tie suet to a tree trunk
set out fresh water
and watch my birds
see
circle
wheel

shyly approach my feeders
eat, drink, and preen
take a dustbath
chatter and chip

then return
to feed again

My spirit leaps
with joy in Your creation
as I share some small measure
of Your vast richness
with Your birds

I give them but Your gift

You give to me
Your life
Your very blood
Your body

to meet my spirit's need

Margaret Clarkson
Willowdale, Ont.

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Consider the squirrels...and those miserable walnuts

Bert Wiltvoet

There's a walnut tree in one of our neighbours' backyard. I know, because I'm finding all these green tennisballs in various corners of our backyard. If you leave a door of the house open for a while you may even find these things making their way into your kitchen or hallway. Strange how walnuts, when they are still inside their green hulls, can travel for hundreds of yards!

Signs of fall, you say with a smile. You know who makes these walnuts travel, too. Mr. and Mrs. Squirrel are getting ready for winter. They are among a select group of animals that think ahead. They are laying up treasures for themselves which they may or may not be able to find again once the cold weather sets in.

Not that it matters too much what they are doing. City squirrels are surrounded by bird feeders that will help them through the winter. My large bag of mixed seeds and nuts will help make the "r-months" quite bearable for the little furred creatures.

So, what's the point of this story? A little moral — Provide for the future? Think ahead?

No, just a question: "How does one get the brown stain that comes from sitting on a squashed walnut hull out of a light pair of trousers?"

Hymn of praise

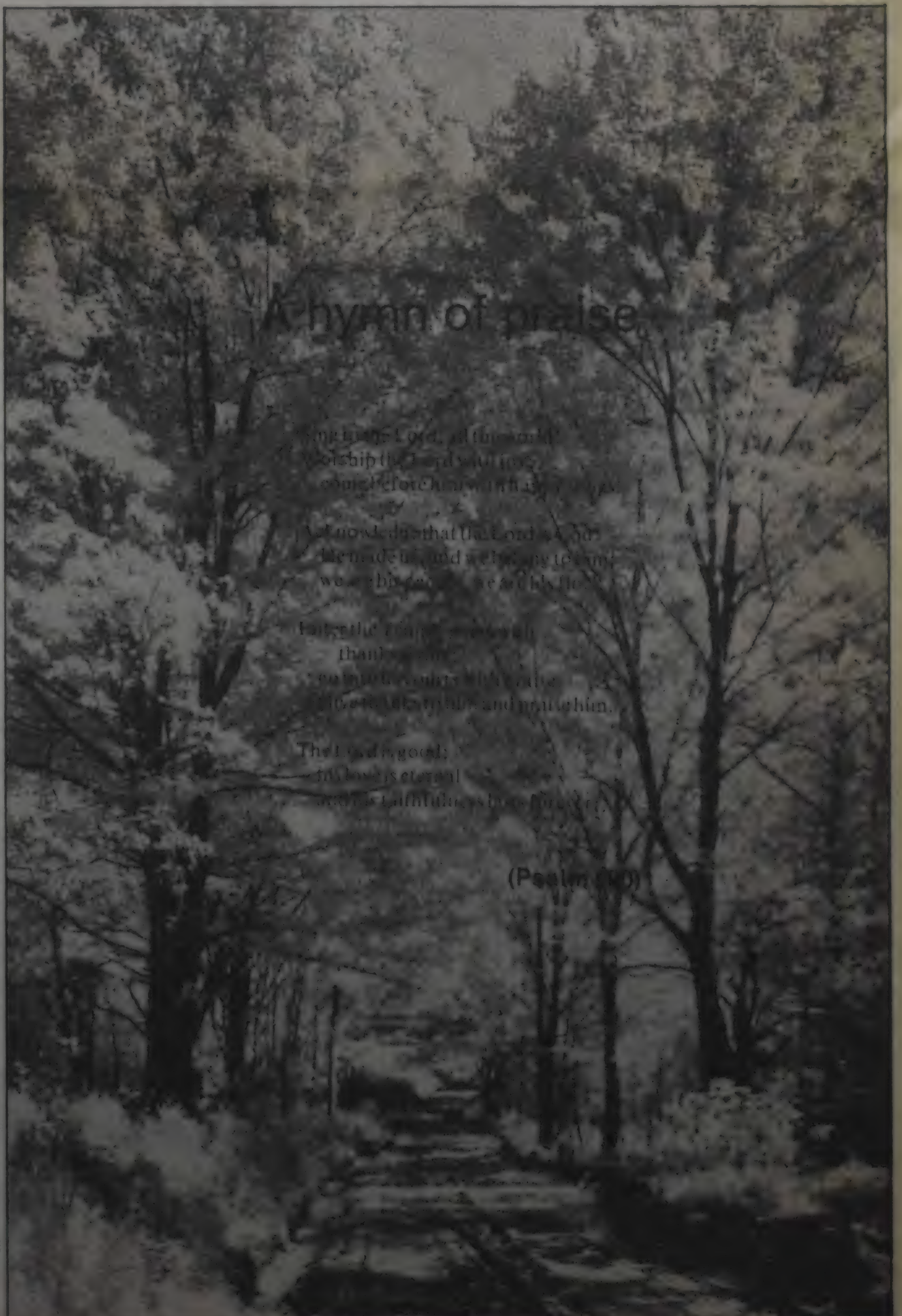
Sing to the Lord, all the world!
Worship the Lord with joy,
sing to him with a new song.

I know, do that that God has done
for us, and we shall be glad
we shall be glad to sing.

For the Lord is great,
thank him,
for his love is great,
for his love is great,
for his love is great.

The Lord is good,
his love is eternal,
his love is eternal,
his love is eternal.

(Psalm 100)



Human Interest

Roots: balancing the old and new

Anne Hutten

Among my most treasured possessions are an ancient treadle sewing machine, a handcarved children's high chair, and a child's cup and saucer. Should the house burn down, these are what I would truly regret losing.

The sewing machine once belonged to Ethel, whom we'd adopted as a substitute grandmother of sorts. When she died, her brother let me have it as a tangible remembrance of her. The high chair was given to me when our second son was on the way. Its elderly owner told me she had used it as a baby. The cup and saucer are the only thing I was able to bring from my country of birth; they are a souvenir of my eight-year-old self spending six weeks near "the shore" in a vain effort by doctors to fatten me up.

What these three items have in common is that they all tie me to an earlier age, whether

my own or that of my brothers. I'm surely not the first to discover that many immigrants have an excessive fondness for antiques. It seems patently clear to me that those of us who were brought across the ocean as children lost a big part of our heritage, and we've never stopped trying to restore that.

Just imagine yourself back in 1950 for a few moments. There I am, sitting on the deck of the steamship *Volendam*, pulling slowly out of Rotterdam harbour as the band plays a farewell song, relatives waving white hankies until we're out of sight. I sit on a big suitcase, crying inconsolably, knowing that one life has

ended, not knowing what will replace it. Like thousands of others who made the trip during that postwar decade, I was torn from my grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, neighbours, school, church, friends. Our toys were mostly taken away. Our piggybanks were emptied and the cash converted to other uses. Only the most essential furniture and clothing made the voyage.

And so, more than forty years later, I am inordinately fond of antiques, especially when they remind me of some older person who managed to fill the void of having no grandparents during my growing years. Similarly, I have always related exceptionally well to older people, and have written a good deal about their oral traditions. Older photos have a special appeal. Glimpses of the

past provide more than nostalgia; they provide a comforting tie to my roots.

It seems to me that this phenomenon relates directly to events in Reformed churches with largely immigrant backgrounds. Older members will recall the enormous fights over abandoning the Dutch language in favour of English. Was it really possible to pray to God in this heathen tongue? I'm sure some of those first immigrants did not believe it was. But the Dutch language went and personal faith survived, regardless.

Strong urge to 'hold on'

Yet the urge to hold on to the past remains strong. In some congregations it is difficult to introduce any change in a worship service without someone seeing it as an abandonment of the one only true faith. The fear of looking

at new ideas is so strong that churches can stagnate entirely. Such churches place too strong an emphasis on their roots.

Other churches, or individual members, prefer to discard all the past and move into new territory on a non-stop basis. Forget the ancient hymns; do away with traditional liturgies; discard the habits of our ancestors! In their haste to move into the future they lose much of their connectedness with the past, with a strong, rich tradition that can nourish and sustain them. This is nothing new. When Luther's Reformers discarded the Catholic Church they broke the images, shattered the stained glass, and resolutely abolished anything smacking of symbolism.

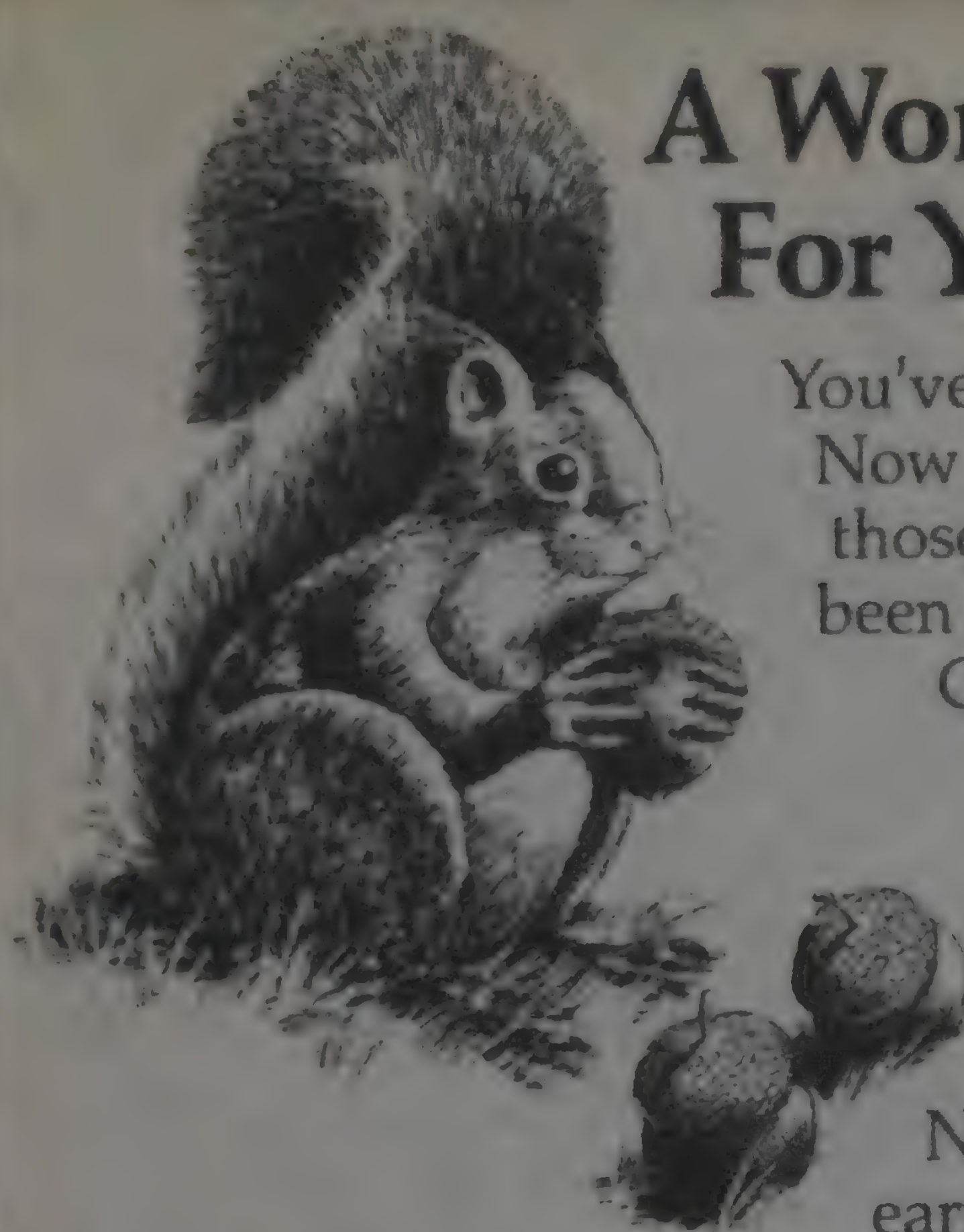
This breaking with the past continues today in the desecration of beautiful old hymns. Take the Christian Reformed revision of "Ah Dearest Jesus" as one example. In its often excellent updating of the *Psalter Hymnal*, the CRC has destroyed this traditional prayer. They've changed the desperate hope of "Oh make me thine forever, and though I fainting be, Lord, let me never, never, outlive my love for thee," to the shallow moralism of "Oh make me yours forever, a loyal servant true." Those of us who value the beauty of old language are unable to make that break with the past.

How to achieve a balance between the old and new remains a constant challenge for us, both as individuals and as churches. We need to look into the future, trusting that our Lord is able to use every new way of singing a new song to him. That means it's OK to introduce candles, paintings and sculptures into our worship if these are able to symbolize the death of Christ for us, or his continued presence in our midst. But we do need to assess the extent to which we make changes. Without strong links to the past, our lives are severely impoverished.

Anne Hutten is a journalist and farmer in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley.

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Education

Universities are guilty of killing the Spirit (a book review article)

John Valk

It is a rare occasion when one can pick up a non-fiction book and become so absorbed that it is difficult to put it down. *Killing the Spirit* was such a book for me, particularly because it pertains directly to my interest in education and my work at the university.

Within the Reformed community a controversy is raging over the teaching of religion (especially Christianity) in public education. Some argue that the public system cannot properly teach Christianity — or any other religion, for that matter. Therefore, public schools ought to remain secular, all the more so because then Christians will come to realize more clearly that Christian schools are their only alternative.

Such was the argument of Abraham Kuyper and his followers in the Netherlands in the 19th century. But not everyone bought it, including some very Reformed-minded people. In fact one such person, Nicholas Beets, well-known and dearly loved Reformed preacher in Utrecht, called Kuyper's argument itself "of the devil."

It's not that Christian schools do not have their place. They most certainly do. But must all Christian influence be removed from the public school, thereby leaving it and its children "to the devil," as Beets put it?

Secularization of education

Let the reader judge whether that has in fact happened in the public schools in North America. In any event, it is acknowledged that there is a crisis in education. That crisis, according to Page Smith, results from the removal and elimination of all "matters of the heart," as Robert Bellah aptly put it. The educational system, especially higher education, has effectively killed the pursuits of the human spirit. It no longer challenges students to seek answers to the "Big Questions," those which ask: Who Am I? What is the meaning and purpose of my life? Where do I come from and where am I going?

Smith states that the slow demise of higher education began when Christian moorings gave way to secularization. Belief in God, natural law and original sin was replaced by a belief in science, rationality and materialism. That resulted from the development of the American ethos.

Americans, early in their history, were seized by the conviction that education was a way to "get ahead." Not only did education become a personal matter, but

prosperity, not knowledge, became the goal. Education became a means to that end.

Five crucial factors

Smith traces the historical development of higher education in America, focusing particularly on the large private institutions, the so-called Ivy League schools. He highlights important junctures along the way and examines crucial directions taken which had devastating consequences for the present. Smith points to five in particular.

The first consequence is a system today predominately governed by "academic fundamentalism," where science, reason and objective, value-free research reign supreme. "Academic fundamentalism" tolerates only that which falls within its own parameters. As such, religious concerns, questions and orientations are deemed irrelevant because religion is unscientific and irrational.

The second is a university increasingly linked to and influenced by the military-industrial complex. It becomes the place where research and development is done for industry and the military. Large grants from these two

sectors have definite strings attached.

The third is the flight from teaching. Due to the ever-present "publish or perish" syndrome, students become a liability, taking precious time away from research and writing. These latter pursuits are crucial for junior faculty seeking job security through tenure. The real victims, however, are the students and the public. Research involvement detracts from good teaching and the public must pay for research which, if published, is understandable to only an elite few.

The fourth is tied to the third. Because faculty have become so removed and disinterested in students, especially undergraduates, most are left to their own devices. No leadership or models are given for students' moral or social development.

The fifth consequence is the neglect of the spiritual. But, states Smith, neglect of the spiritual can be suppressed for only so long. The student rebellions of the '60s and '70s revealed such. They were a reaction to a university that had grown in size but had lost its "soul." It was impersonal and bureaucratic. The emergence of communal living in the '70s and the New Age movement in the '80s were further attempts to return to the "irrational," to recapture the religious dimension of life. To what extent, asks Smith, was the university responsible for its best and brightest students

being so unwittingly and totally absorbed by certain eccentric cult movements and leaders such as Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and Sun Myung Moon?

Religion: the essence of education

The university is slow to catch on, says Smith. Its neglect of life's religious dimension, and its rational, objective and analytical approach in all the disciplines, including the humanities, have given students a totally inadequate picture of their past, present and future.

Allan Bloom's insistence that we return to the "great ideas and books" of the past, as expressed in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*, has a welcome ring. But according to Smith that is only part of the answer. Bloom's approach tends to be ahistorical. It ignores the historical context of ideas. Furthermore, Bloom assumes final and ideal truths can be discovered by reason. That, states Smith, is part and parcel of the whole problem.

Alfred Norton Whitehead stated that "the essence of education is that it be

religious." The universities, according to Peter Berger, "have not only sealed up all the old metaphysical questions, but... have generated philosophical positions that deny the meaningfulness of these questions." That, according to Smith, produces the crisis in higher education.

Killing the Spirit is refreshing. It is broad in scope, ample in detail and fascinating in narrative. It takes a hard look at the most prestigious universities in America, questioning their directions and critiquing their elitism. It ought to stimulate all people involved directly or indirectly in the important activity of educating. Most importantly, it seriously questions the assertion that the teaching of religion and religious matters have no place in education. A must-read.

Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America, Page Smith. Toronto: Penguin Book, 1991, 316pp.; softcover, \$12.99.

John Valk is university chaplain for the Christian Reformed Church at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

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Church

Albanians confronted with potpourri of religions

Ron Macmillan

TIRANA, ALBANIA (NNI)— After a week of concerted outreach and literature distribution in Tirana, the capital city of Albania, in early July, 172 Albanians had professed the Christian faith and 43 agreed to be baptized in a lakeside ceremony.

The outreach was dubbed the "Albanian Encouragement Project" (AEP) and sponsored by various missions, including Youth With A Mission, Operation Mobilization, International Teams and Open Doors.

Such results seem to confirm in many minds that Albania ranks among the world's easiest countries in which to conduct evangelization. To say "the harvest is ripe" in Albania is a ridiculous understatement — a monumental irony in a land which merely a year ago revelled in its status as "the world's most atheistic state."

Josif Paparisto is the only Protestant believer encountered by project workers who claims to have been a believer before the July project. According to Paparisto, evangelism is now incredibly easy. "Just walk down to the centre of Tirana, sit on a bench, open your Bible, look around, then smile... In five minutes I can guarantee that at least five young men will

have approached you and will want to talk about what you are reading."

Foreign visitors in Tirana easily attract a crowd. The government does not pay Albanian workers, and so most report for work only to sign in and then leave to search for odd jobs which pay in food. City streets are criss-crossed by people wandering in search of work.

Paparisto notes four reasons for the surge in religious interest: young people want to talk with foreigners; they want to practise their English; they have nothing else to do; and — not least — they are extremely curious about Western culture, including Christianity. However, he warns that for now much of the interest in

religion is superficial.

Ergys Sako, a young artist, admits he only pretended to commit his life to Christ at one of the evening rallies. "I just wanted a book," he says, "but I don't want to decide now. It's too early... This is not the time for deciding; it is the time for exploring."

The vice-minister of culture, Capajev Gjokutaj, declares, "We have come from a system that was totally closed so it is inevitable that we will go to extremes in reaction." He is of the opinion that ultimately "a good part [of the population] will remain atheist."

Changing religions like changing clothes

The person responsible for Albania's open door policy to all religions is Preg Zogai, minister of culture. He recognizes the moral and spiritual vacuum in the country and fears total anarchy.

By giving *carte blanche* to religious leaders and workers to come and spread their message, he and other Albanian leaders hope to import an ethic and



restore some principle that will restrain the people from violence in the difficult march toward democracy.

However, the indiscriminacy of the invitation worries some foreign evangelical observers. Two weeks prior to the evangelistic campaign, a New Age group called "New Future" blitzed Tirana with workers and literature. The week before it was the turn of evangelists from the Baha'i faith. In early July, representatives from the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses were negotiating long-term visas for their missionaries.

Some Albanians are beginning to get very confused as this undignified scramble of the cults and religions heats up. Altin Raxhmi, a young, intense 18-year-old literature student says that in the last six months he has been "a Muslim, then an existentialist à la Sartre, then a Baha'i, then an existentialist à la Kierkegaard, then a Freudian; and now I want to be a Christian."

He murmurs sadly, "It seems that truth has a room in a house with a million windows; but how long is it going to take to look through all the windows before I find it?"

Paparisto notes that the lack of total commitment to any particular faith has historical roots. "We have changed our religions like others change their clothes... First we were Orthodox, then we all became Catholics in the 11th century, then we all became Muslims when the Turks arrived in the 15th century."

In 1944 communist rule began under Enver Hoxha, an ardent Stalinist. In 1967, 23 years into his rule, all churches were suddenly closed, priests imprisoned, and religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter abolished. Even giving a child a biblical name merited a five-year jail term. Hoxha had decided to follow the Chinese pattern of "cultural revolution."

At that time, the religious allegiances of Albanians broke down to 70 per cent Muslim, 20 per cent Orthodox and 10 per cent Catholic. A couple of hundred Protestants are known to have been living in the small city of Korçe.

Hoxha maintained his anti-religion policy and an isolationist international policy until dying in his sleep in 1984.

Political ferment

Freedom protests in July 1990 led appointed successor Ramiz Alia to promise a pluralization of the political system. After balking several times he allowed an election to take place in March 1991, during which his communists gained 60 per cent of the vote — according to foreign observers, mainly because of the uninformed peasant vote.

The urban population refused to recognize the new government and economy-crippling strikes led to its resignation. The country is now ruled by a coalition government of communists and various opposition party members called the "Government of National Stabilization."

Present fear among evangelicals that Albania will rejoin the Islamic fold appears groundless, though for cultural and economic reasons rather than religious ones. Nationalism makes them want to affirm their identity as Albanians, and Christianity is their most ancient faith.

In addition, Albanians want to be part of Europe, not the Middle East. Buyer Muthagi, a 22-year-old graduate from Tirana University, says, "Europe is Christian and more advanced and we are Europeans. The Islamic countries are poorer and less advanced, so we must profess Christianity as we are part of the Christian West."

An Open Letter to All Canadians.



Tuesday, September 24, 1991

My fellow Canadians:

Today in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister is putting forward proposals to renew the Canadian federation.

The proposals are not fixed or final. They are a basis for discussion. Canadians are encouraged to debate them vigorously and openly and suggest how they can be improved so that every Canadian can feel welcome, understood and respected in our own land.

A Special Joint Committee of the House of Commons and Senate will seek the views of Canadians on these proposals. Please participate actively in the Committee's work. It's an opportunity to forge the kind of Canada that can best serve the interests of Canadians now and in the future.

The process of renewing the Canadian partnership will not be easy. Canada was born and built because previous generations understood that unity is the key to prosperity and that the keys to unity are tolerance, compromise and goodwill.

In difficult times, these characteristics are often in short supply but that is when we need them most.

Canadians have the opportunity as never before to create a Canada in which all Canadians can feel at home. Together, we have the opportunity to strengthen this country to make it more prosperous and more responsive to the aspirations of all its people.

I urge you to take part in renewing Canada. It's our country that's at stake.

The Right Honourable Joe Clark,
President of the Privy Council and
Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

Canada

Advice/News



Peter and Marja are



Dear P & M:

I'm really having trouble feeling positive about my church these days. I hear my parents and their friends arguing about different issues and I see people taking sides in my Christian high school. Personally I really don't get too excited about these things. I'm thinking about finding a different denomination where people love each other instead of saying cruel things about each other. Of course I'll stay till I'm out of the house.

Dear Confused by Conflict:

The conflict that is ripping apart the Christian Reformed Church and some other denominations is causing a lot of young people like you to give up on the church. They quietly conclude: if this is Christianity, who needs it? In your case, we are relieved to hear that you have not lost your faith or your desire to be a member of a church. You are just tempted to exchange your home community for one that you hope will be more loving and less troubled.

It grieves us deeply that many of our young people are taking sides while others are forced to look elsewhere for a place "where people love each other." The parents, pastors and persons who are most passionately involved in these church fights have not considered the price that your generation will pay for years to come. You are disillusioned with your spiritual family; others will go a step further and completely distance themselves from the Christian faith!

A report presented to a special session of the CRC's Classis Niagara on Oct. 3 included the following relevant section entitled "Poor role-modelling":

Our children are watching and listening. They see every move we make and hear every word we say. What are they learning from us?

From us they are learning intolerance. Differences are not interesting; they're threatening. Those who think differently on some points are not to be accepted but rejected.

From us they are learning judgmentalism. Label a person, put him or her in a box, and you're done with that individual and free from the disagreeable task of finding ways to get along.

From us our children are learning unhealthy methods of conflict-resolution. Disagreements give us the right to hurl accusations (you're apostate), issue ultimatums (repent or else), and break relationships (we're separating, seceding, leaving).

From us our children are learning the dynamics of verbal and emotional violence.

The postmark on your letter shows that you are from an area that is particularly divided. This may lead you to believe that this is how it is throughout your denomination. In fact, there

are many congregations and classes that are able to work together in harmony despite their differences. Those of us who work and worship in hornets' nests need to be reminded of the bigger picture which is much happier and healthier than what we may be experiencing locally. You may find it hard to believe, but there are many calm and loving congregations out there in your denomination which are able to focus on the ministry to which Christ has called them.

We hope that you are able to remove yourself somewhat from this conflict. Don't let all this talk of leaving cause you to counter with your own threats of leaving. We need young people like you who understand what Jesus meant when he gave his people his new commandment: "That you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

Listen to one more section, entitled "Labelling," of the Classis Niagara report quoted above and see how it applies to your comment about taking sides:

"Whose side are you on? Are you liberal or conservative? Are you for women in office or against? Do you believe that the days of creation are 24-hour periods or longer stretches of time? Are you concerned or not? Do you think like me, believe like me, feel like me?" These are the kinds of questions that are now being asked in our midst.

We feel each other out like wary adversaries, forgetting that the Kingdom belongs to those who enter it like children. Youngsters do not make enemies the way adults do. By contrast, we are so busy pitting the Blue team versus the Yellow team that we forget that together we constitute the Red team, washed in Jesus' blood, while the real enemy is the Grey team made up of unbelievers who belong to the Kingdom of Darkness, ruled by Satan, the father of lies.

Thanks for making us aware of the cost of this conflict. You know, Billy Graham has always said that all his crusading efforts would be worth it if only one person became a believer. Surely, then, it is worth all our efforts to reconcile if it means that only one of our young people keeps his or her faith. To that end, you and your generation can count on the prayers of our readers during this painful period in our church's history.

Write to: P&M
c/o Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slafstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Purlevict, Tom Zest, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

No cap on refugee sponsorship, but pipe line smaller

Bert Witvoet

Last week we reported on how the Refugee Claimant Backlog program is taking far too long in determining the status of over one thousand refugees already in Canada. This week we take a look at the program that allows refugees outside Canada to enter as landed immigrants.

BURLINGTON, Ont. — Canada has tightened its policy of allowing refugees to be admitted to Canada, says Peter Zwart, refugee co-ordinator for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). "We're having all kinds of problems with the government process. There are large waiting lists at Canadian embassies all over the world."

What troubles Zwart is that the government is more and more using criteria for refugees that it normally uses for immigrants. "We have always thought that immigrants and refugees are two different categories," he says. "Immigrants want to leave their country of their own will; refugees are pressed to leave."

In 1979-'80, when the boatpeople showed up, the criteria for refugees were more relaxed. Today refugees are often selected according to family connections in Canada under the unification program, skill, education and ability to speak English or French. Except for the family reunification criterion, the other considerations place too much emphasis on benefit to Canada to pass for compassion, says Zwart.

Slowing down the flow

The government allows for two ways of sponsoring refugees: privately which is done mainly by church groups; and government sponsorship. Officially there is no cap on the number of refugees private organizations can sponsor. It is not hard to make application for refugees, says Zwart. But once the refugee is in the process, it takes a long time before he or she is interviewed.

And the process is getting longer and longer, according to Zwart. In most cases it takes two or more years. He thinks

that by slowing down the process the government is able to restrain sponsorship without actually having to declare a limit.

The long process is creating special difficulties for refugees waiting in host countries. Most countries will allow a refugee to stay until an interview has been given by a refugee-accepting country. But now that the interview may come two years later, some countries, such as Germany, are threatening deportation.

Don't give up

According to Zwart the number of private sponsorships is down because of the slow process. Most churches wait for their one application to come through, rather than to make several applications. Some simply give up.

He urges churches not to give up on private sponsorships. "Make several applications," he says. "If you can't handle the situation if and when the refugees come, we will find another church. Most churches are more than willing to help immediately. It's the long-range commitment that they shun away from."

At the moment there are about 30 Christian Reformed Churches that are still actively settling refugees. Another 15 "paper-sponsor" refugees on behalf of relatives who assume full responsibility once the refugees arrive. At the moment most of the refugees that come to Canada through CRWRC are from eastern African countries such as Ethiopia, Djibouti, Sudan and Somalia — with a smattering of political refugees coming from Rwanda, Tanzania and other African countries.

Other major refugee producing areas in the world are Asia and Eastern Europe.

Zwart, who is also the secretary of the Canadian Council for Refugees, travels frequently to other parts of the world to be in touch with the refugees, if possible, and to contact agencies in the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy and Germany where many refugees are awaiting sponsorship to Canada.

Christian 'star search' under way

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (EP) — "The 700 Club" and Star Song communications, in conjunction with major market Christian radio stations which are heard across North America, are presenting New Artist Search '91, which is being touted as the largest

nationwide talent search of its kind ever held in the Christian marketplace. Beginning Sept. 30, the CBN Network and radio stations started airing spots announcing the search, which has categories for male vocalist, female vocalist, best duo or group, and best

instrumental. Eight semi-finalists will be flown to Virginia Beach to appear on "The 700 Club" for playoffs to be aired Dec. 26. The grand prize is a recording contract with Star Song.

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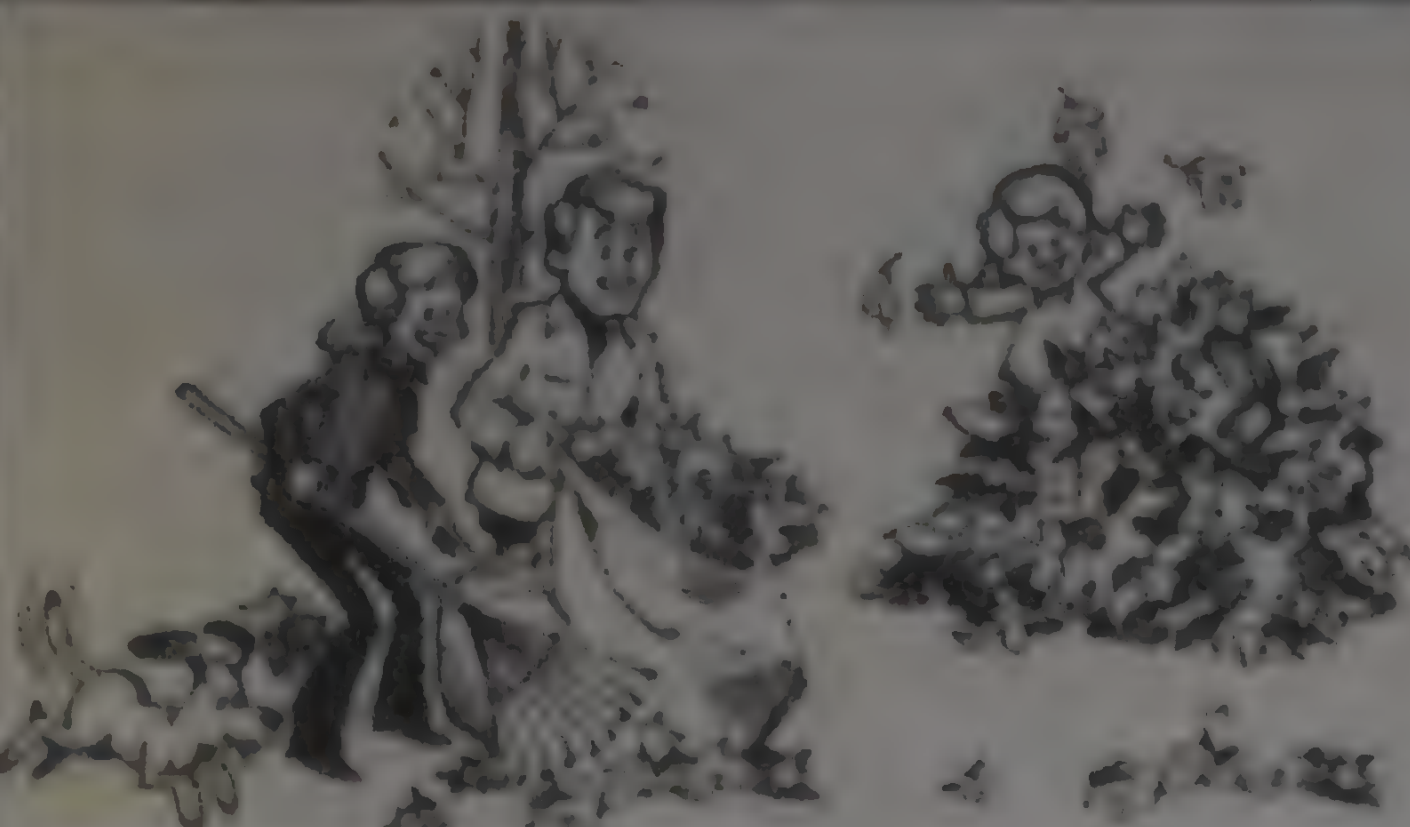
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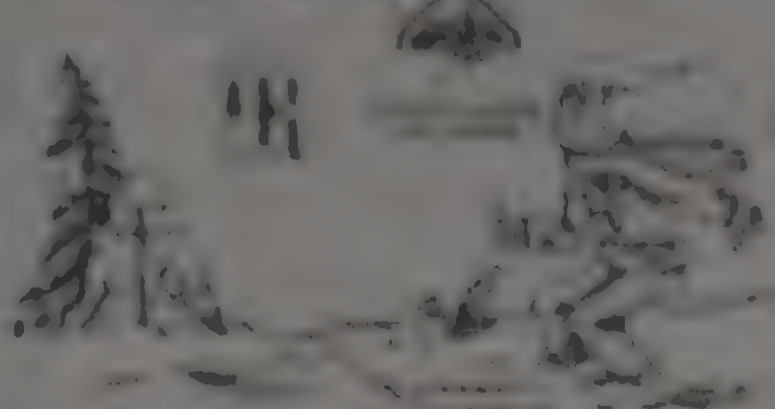
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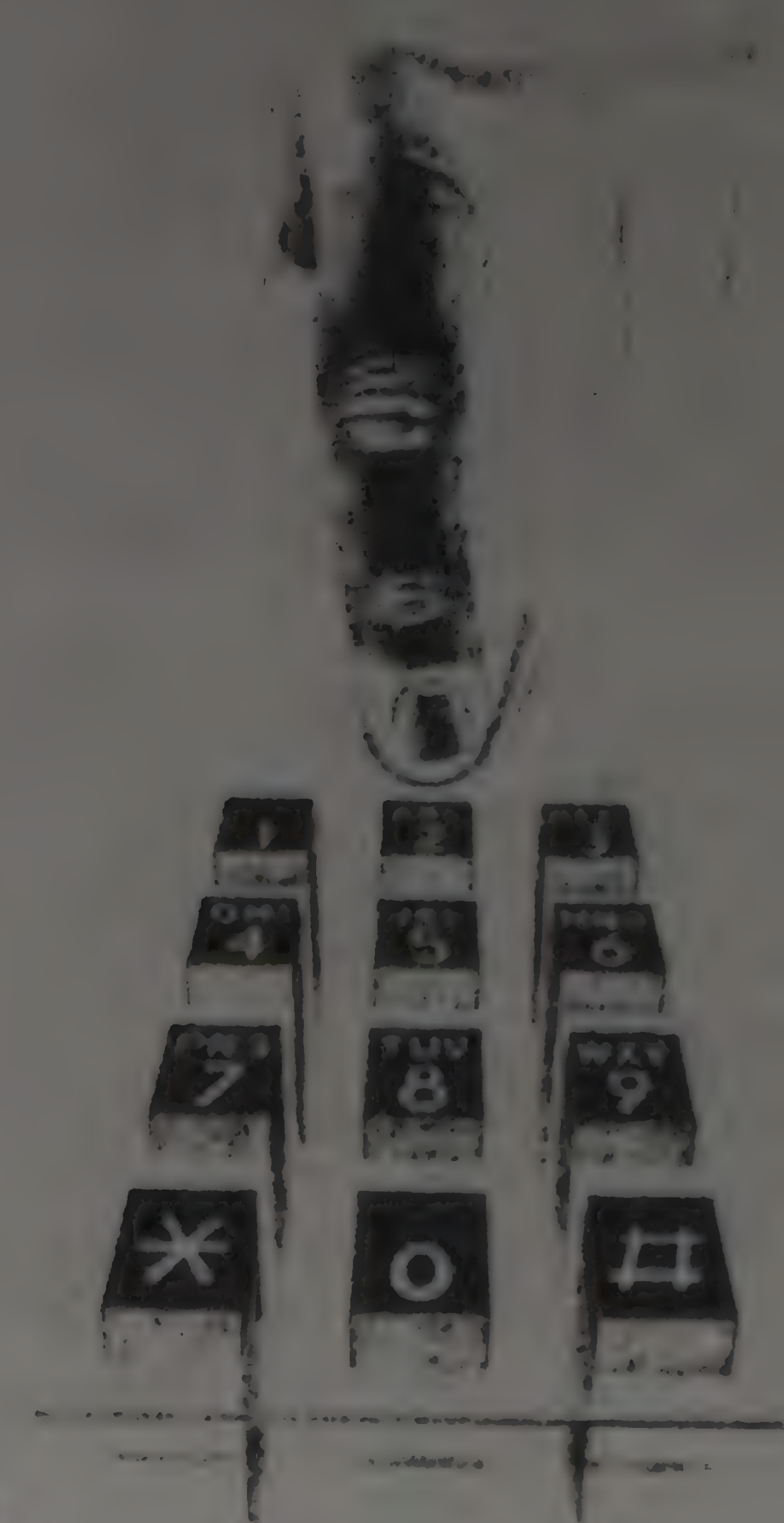
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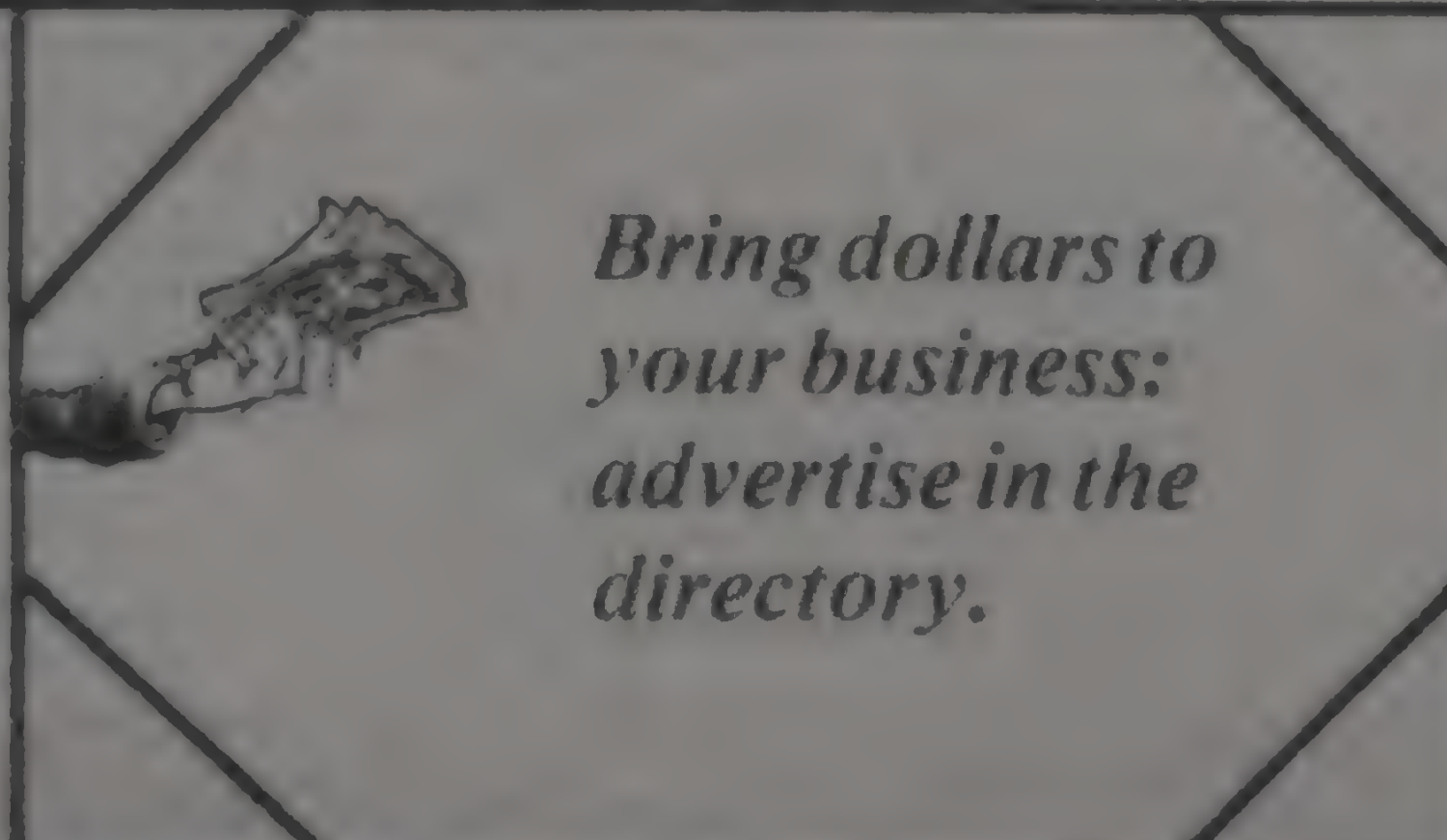


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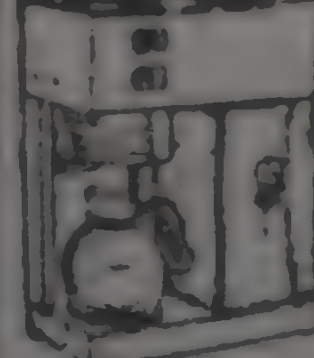


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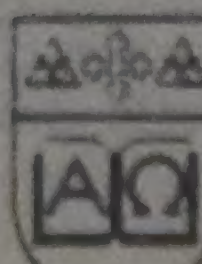
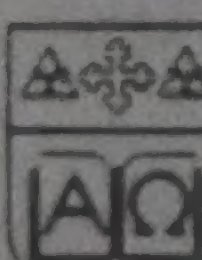
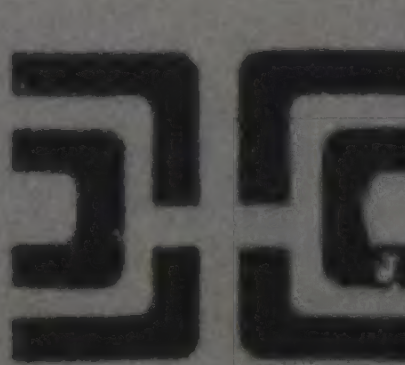
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With joy and praise to God, we celebrate the marriage of JANINE JOY daughter of Martin and Helen Boomsma and PETER DWAYNE son of George and Shirley Bergsma on Saturday, Oct. 26, 1991, D.V., at 11 a.m., in the Chr. Ref. Church, Georgetown, Ont., Pastor Paul Stadt officiating. Future address: 76 Maple Ave., E., Apt. #5, Georgetown, ON L7G 1X7 PRANGER-TEENINGA: With joy and thankfulness to the Lord, we are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of our parents, JANE PRANGER and PIETER TEENINGA On Saturday Oct. 12, 1991, at 11 a.m., D.V., in the Calvin Chr. Ref. Church of Ottawa/Nepean, Ont., Rev. J. Kerssies officiating. We pray that the Lord may bless their lives together, and that they may share in many happy years to come. With love from all your children and grandchildren: Helen & Hank Hogeveen and family Betty Pranger and family Susan & Sid Jansen and family Gus & Barbara Pranger and family Janette & Gordon Bogart and Bernard & Anita Teeninga and family Albert & Betty Teeninga and family Jake & Jenny Teeninga and family Pete & Ruth Teeninga and family Hilda & Gordon Schuldis Correspondence address: 31 Hilltop Drive, Bowmansville, ON L1C 2X7	1956 October 12 1991 The children of PETER and CATHERINE RUSTENBURG (nee Veneman) give praise and thanks to the Lord for their parents' 35th wedding anniversary. It is our hope and prayer that the Lord will continue to surround them with his love and bless them as they have truly been a blessing to us. Wilma & John Snippe — St. Catharines, Ont. Sunshine, Esther, Janessa Paul & Wilma Rustenburg — Jordan Station, Ont. Peter, Catherine, Aaron Sandra & Mark Erb — St. Catharines, Ont. Rich & Cordi Rustenburg — Beams-ville, Ont. Bradley Home address: 17 Pinewood Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 1W2  <i>Congratulations to John and Jo Schweitzer (nee Lanting) on the occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary!</i> Maasland Edmonton 1936 October 21 1991 With praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, we announce the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents JOHN and JO SCHWEITZER (nee Lanting) We thank you for the love and care you have given all of us and pray that our God will continue to bless you richly. Happy anniversary Mom and Dad, Grandpa and Grandma, from: Alice & Morris Greidanus — Grand Rapids, Mich. Jane & Bill Verveda — Agana, Guam Tony & Clara Schweitzer — Winni-peg, Man. Ralph & Joanne Schweitzer — Maple Ridge, B.C. Edith & Ed De Haan — Lethbridge, Alta. Marja & Peter Slofstra — St. Catharines, Ont. 23 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Home address: #217 Summit Village 10041 - 149 Str., Edmonton, AB T5P 4V7	Trenton, Ont. Calgary, Alta. 1956 1991 PETER and JO-ANN VAN DYK With joy and thankfulness to our heavenly Father we may celebrate on Oct. 13, 1991, our 35th wedding anniversary together with our children and 12 grandchildren, family and friends. Mary Ann & Frank Rohling — Cal-gary Mark, Derek, Alison Peter W. & Cindy Van Dyk — Kit-chener, Ont. Jason, Scott, Bradley, Jeffrey Jennifer & Tom Thiedemann — Calgary Bryan, Jessica, David Michael & Yvonne Van Dyk — Cal-gary Amanda, Michelle. Home address: 4007 - 45th St. S.W., Calgary, AB T3E 6P2 1951 October 19 1991 "Teach me your way O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name" (Ps. 86:11). It is with thankful hearts that we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents RALPH and JANTINA STRYKER (nee Benjamins) With joy we would like to express our congratulations and best wishes to you. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you with many more healthy happy years together and with us. With love and thanks for all the many deeds, you have lovingly and willingly done for us. Jenny & John Hoonaard — Walton Tina, Peter, Carl, Evan, Camellia Evert & Liz Stryker — Brussels Kristopher, Jenna, Brett Henrietta & Fred Vander Sterre — Brussels Rachel, Peter, Sarah, Jessica, Esther Carl & Wilma Stryker — Kitchener Rebecca, Gregory, Brian Albert & Debra Stryker — Blyth Shawna, Jason, Nicholas, Katherine John Stryker — Stratford & Christine Janssen (fiancee) — Kitchener. An open house reception will be held Saturday Oct. 19, 1991, from 2 - 4 p.m. at the Chr. Ref. Church, Clin-ton, Ont. Home address: 363 Townsend St., Box 184, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0 1941 November 6 1991 HARRY and FOKIE SIEBENGA With thankfulness to God for his loving care and faithfulness, we are happy to announce our 50th wedding anniversary which we hope to celebrate with our children, grandchildren and friends. Home address: General Delivery, Bentley, AB T0C 0J0	1951 October 29 1991 "Give thanks to God, for he is good; his love endures forever" (Ps. 118:1). With thankfulness and praise to God, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents DIRK and DIEN VAN KAMPEN (nee Linker) We pray for many more years together. With love from your family: Janet & John Schinkel — London, Ont. Christopher, Jennifer, Elizabeth John & Jacqui Van Kampen — Spruce Grove, Alta. Jessica, Jason, Jeremy Anita & Dean Hinchcliffe — Sarnia, Ont. Home address: 100 Champlain Cres., London, ON N5V 1H1
				Obituaries
				On Sept. 22, 1991, the Lord took unto himself KATHERINE BOS (nee Vander Stel) at the age of 95. She was the widow of Rev. Ralph J. Bos. Children: Dr. & Mrs. (Kathryn) Dewey J. Hoi-tenga, Jr. — 2105 Centennial Ct. N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504 Grandchildren, great-grandchild-ren, a brother-in-law and a sister-in-law, nieces and nephews. Ymuiden St. Catharines 1912 1991 "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" (Ps. 27: 4a). On Sept. 22, 1991, the Lord called home his faithful servant MARTIN LANGBROEK Beloved husband of Nel, for almost 54 years. Dear father and grandfather of: Alice & Jerry Gerritsen — Beams-ville, Ont. Alan & Michelle, April, Nancy & John (fiance), Melissa Dick & Linda Langbroek — St. Catharines, Ont. Darrick George & Joanna Langbroek — St. Catharines, Ont. Diana & Roy, Martin & Michelle (girlfriend) Ann & Clement Bezemer — Grimsby, Ont. Katherine & Wayne, William & Christina, Clement Jr., Maria Lynn. Funeral service was held on Thursday Sept. 26, 1991, in Trinity Chr. Ref. Church, St. Catharines, Ont., Rev. C. Tuininga officiating. Correspondence address: 9 Kerwin Gate, St. Catharines, ON L2N 4J7
				For Rent
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(416) 774-8291 Jack Hultema res.</p>	<div><div><h3>Toronto District Christian High School</h3><p>invites applications from qualified teachers to fill a position to teach English for approximately 6 months.</p><p>The vacancy is due to a maternity leave scheduled to begin in early December.</p><p>Please send resumes to the principal:</p><p>Wm. Barneveld 377 Woodbridge Ave. Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8</p></div></div> <div><div><h3>Help Wanted</h3><div><div><h3>Brampton Second Christian Reformed Church</h3><p>requires a</p><h3>YOUTH PASTOR</h3><p>(ordained/unordained)</p><p>to develop programs to challenge our youth to active participation in the Christian life.</p><p>Education, training and experience in youth ministry are desirable. Excellent employment and housing benefits will be provided. More information and a church profile are available upon request.</p><p>Resumes can be sent to:</p><p>the Search Committee, c/o Joe Grootenboer 9 Willis Dr., Brampton, Ontario, L6W 1A8 (416) 450-6796</p></div></div></div><div><div><div><h3>Redeemer College</h3><p>A Christian University College</p></div><div><p>invites applications for a</p><h3>Dean of Students</h3><p>commencing July 1, 1992</p><p>Reporting directly to the President, this person is expected to provide vision and leadership for the Student Life Department, which includes supervising a comprehensive program of student services. Requirements include a Master's degree in a related field; demonstrated leadership ability; work experience in student services in a post-secondary environment preferred; commitment in word and deed to living a life that reflects the biblical, Reformed Christian basis of the College. 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Familiarity with "Fund Accounting" will be considered an asset. Applications or inquiries, resumes, and references are to be directed to the Human Resources Director and will be considered until the position is filled.</p><p><i>In accordance with Canadian Immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.</i></p><p>Ancaster, Ontario L96 3N6 (416) 648-2131</p></div></div></div></div>	<div><div><h3>INTERMEDIATE ACCOUNTANT</h3><p>Crossroads Christian Communications Inc., producers of 100 Huntley Street, have an immediate opening for an <i>Intermediate Accountant</i>. Achievement of an intermediate level in a recognized accounting program and 2 to 3 years experience in the accounting field is required. 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Will provide the leadership needed to assure that academic and administrative operations are supported by appropriate information technology, help prepare plans for a library/information centre, and direct the work of library staff. Demonstrated abilities in planning and management necessary; doctoral degree preferred; MLS or equivalent from ALA-accredited school required. Position subject to board approval.</p><p>Registrar: Responsibilities include planning, organizing, and managing a computer-based information system for student registration and records. Preference given to candidates with graduate degree and post-secondary academic experience as faculty member or administrator. Position subject to board approval.</p><p>Director of Resident Life: Administer the student housing operations, including supervision of resident life staff; supervise operations of the student union building; coordinate services for minority and international students. 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<h3>Teachers</h3> <p>DRAYTON, Ont.: Calvin Chr. School needs a teacher for Grade 1, due to a maternity leave. This position will be available from December 1, 1991, until the end of the school year in June 1992. The ability to teach French is an asset. Please forward all inquiries and resumes to: Mr. A.J. Vanderstoel, Principal, Calvin Chr. School, Box 141, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0. Telephone: (519) 638-2935.</p> <p>JARVIS, Ont.: Jarvis District Chr. School, due to maternity reasons, will be in need of a Grade 3 teacher for 25 pupils, beginning January 6, 1992. The successful candidate will have the option to continue in this position for the 1992/93 school year.</p> <p>JDCS consists of 10 classrooms and a total of 15 teachers. If you are interested in joining a group of dedicated and enthusiastic teachers who love teaching, please contact us. All letters of application, resumes and inquiries should be sent prior to November 1, 1991, to: Garry Glasbergen, Principal, Jarvis District Chr. School, Box 520, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0. Tel.: (519) 587-4444 (school) or (519) 587-5374 (home).</p> <p>WELLANDPORT, Ont.: Wellandport Chr. School will have an opening for a Grade 4 teacher, due to maternity leave. The position will be from January 6 to June 30, 1992, and could become a full-time position in September 1992. Please send resumes to: Wellandport Christian School, R.R. #1, Welland, ON L0R 2J0. Tel. (416) 386-6272.</p>		

Events

Events

40th ANNIVERSARY

The Christian Reformed Church of Exeter, Ont. will celebrate its 40th anniversary, D.V., on **October 26 and 27, 1991.**

Sat. 7 p.m. Informal entertaining program in Exeter Public School on 93 Victoria Street East. Refreshments.
Sun. 10 a.m. & 7 p.m. Worship services featuring former pastors.

All former members are invited to join us in our celebrations. For information, contact **Harold De Vries** at (519) 235-0941.

Eighth Annual Senior Citizen's Day at Redeemer College

**Thursday, October 31, 1991
Beginning at 9:30 a.m.**

Dr. Gene Haas, Assistant Professor of Religion and Theology at Redeemer College, will address you in the morning. His topic will be based on I Corinthians 9 and is titled: "Slaves of Christ".

Redeemer College Students will entertain you in the afternoon with mime and music.

**Lunch: \$7.50 per person
Please register now,
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Redeemer College

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Calendar of Events

- | | |
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| <p>Oct. 9-17 Emmeloord Christian Male Choir with organist Klaas Jan Mulder in concert. All events start at 8 p.m.
 Oct. 9: Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont.; Oct. 10: Dundas St. Centre United Church, London, Ont.; Oct. 11: Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.; Oct. 12: St. Paul's Anglican Church, Toronto, Ont.; Oct. 16: St. George's Anglican Church, Guelph, Ont.; Oct. 17: Covenant CRC, St. Catharines, Ont.</p> <p>Oct. 12-13 Twenty-fifth anniversary of the Ottawa Christian School, Ottawa, Ont. For info. call (613) 722-5836.</p> <p>Oct. 13 Organ concert by John Wm. Vandertuin, 8 p.m., St. Andrew's Presb. Church, Ottawa, Ont.</p> <p>Oct. 17 Fall rally of the Can. Fed. of Chr. Ref. Women, 10 a.m., First CRC, Tweedsmuir Ave., Chatham, Ont. Speakers: Rev. Anthony De Jager from Sarnia, and Mr. Bert Witvoet from St. Catharines. Admission \$3.00. Bring your own lunch!</p> <p>Oct. 18-19 Klaas Jan Mulder (organist) in concert. Oct. 18: 8 p.m., Providence CRC, Beamsville, Ont.; Oct. 19: 8 p.m., Central Pres. Church (Caroline & Charlton), Hamilton, Ont.</p> <p>Oct. 18-20 M2/W2 dinners focussing on healing the wounds of crime. Oct. 18: Edmonton Chr. High, Edmonton, Alta.; Oct. 19: Dalhousie MB Community Church, Calgary, Alta.; Oct. 20: Gem Community Hall, Gem, Alta. All events start at 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Oct. 19 "Netherlands Bazaar" from 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. at the Thornhill Community Centre, Thornhill, Ont. Crafts, baking flowers, white-elephants, restaurant. Admission free. All proceeds to needy families of Dutch descent in Ontario. For info. contact Bets Speelman (416) 742-1172.</p> <p>Oct. 19 All-Ontario Diaconal Conference at John Knox Chr. School, Brampton, Ont. 16 workshops and 15 seminars. Call (416) 646-4511 for a registration form.</p> <p>Oct. 2-22 Concert tour by Willem van Suijdam (organist), Bert Koelewyn (piano), Herman and Henk-Jan Drost (trumpets). All events start at 8 p.m.
 Oct. 12: Maranatha CRC Bowmanville, Ont.; Oct. 14: Christ Church Cathedral (8:30 p.m.), Hamilton, Ont.; Oct. 15: Can. Ref. Church, Attercliffe, Ont.; Oct. 16: Westmount CRC, Strathroy, Ont.; Oct. 17: Can. Ref. Church, Fergus, Ont.; Oct. 18: Maranatha CRC, St. Catharines, Ont.; Oct. 19: Second CRC, Brampton, Ont.; Oct. 22: Can. Ref. Church, Thornhill, Ont.</p> | <p>Oct. 23 Fall rally of the Bowmanville region of Chr. Ref. Ladies' Societies. At 10 a.m., Hope CRC, Port Perry, Ont. Speakers: Rev. Karl House and Mrs. Caroline Cave.</p> <p>Oct. 23-26 Organ concerts by Andre Knevel. Oct. 23: First CRC, New Westminster, B.C.; Oct. 24: Can. Ref. Church, Smithers, B.C.; Oct. 25: Maranatha Can. Ref. Church, Surrey, B.C.; Oct. 26: Can. Ref. Church, Abbotsford, B.C. All events at 8 p.m.</p> <p>Oct. 26 Back to God Hour Rally, 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, Woodstock, Ont. With Rev. Juan Boonstra and The St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir.</p> <p>Oct. 26 Reformation Day Rally sponsored by Ottawa area CRC s, Presbyterians and Baptist churches. Rally starts at 7:30 p.m. in Calvin CRC, Ottawa, Ont., with keynote speaker Dr. Jay Adams. (Also attend Sunday's inter-church rally, 7 p.m., at St. Andrew's Presb. Church; on Monday and Tuesday, at 10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., listen to special speakers.) For info. contact Vivian Bylsma, 27 Overlake Dr., Nepean, Ont.</p> <p>Oct. 26 Christian Rainbows meets at 10 a.m., CRC, Ingersoll, Ont. Theme: "Obtaining housing and support services for the psychiatrically disabled." To register call (416) 639-1075.</p> <p>Oct. 26 CLAC Fall Conference at CLAC's head office, 5920 Atlantic Dr., Mississauga, Ont. Speaker: Eric Floreen. Registration at 9:15 a.m. For info. call (416) 670-7383.</p> <p>Oct. 26 1991 Holy Spirit Conference, Kennedy Rd. Kennedy Rd. Tabernacle, Brampton, Ont. Registration at 9 a.m. For info. call (416) 270-4026.</p> <p>Oct. 26-27 40th Anniversary celebrations of the CRC, Port Alberni, B.C. (For details see C.C., Oct. 4/91)</p> <p>Oct. 26-27 40th Anniversary of Chr. Ref. Church, Exeter, Ont. Oct. 26: entertaining program at Exeter Public School; Oct. 27: special worship services at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. For info. call (519) 235-0941.</p> <p>Oct. 31 Eighth Annual Senior Citizens' Day, 9:30 a.m., Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Gene Haas. Entertainment in the afternoon. Lunch is \$7.50 p.p. Register now at (416) 648-2131.</p> <p>Oct. 31 Annual volunteer appreciation day at Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont. Starts at 9 a.m. Speaker: Mrs. Eleanor Wood. For info. call (416) 945-9631.</p> |
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For crossword puzzle, see p. 5

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Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

On name-calling and dialogue

Search for Community in a Withering Tradition: Conversations between a Marxian Atheist and a Calvinian Christian, by Kai Nielsen and Hendrik Hart. Lanham MD: University Press of America and Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 1990. Softcover, 241 pages. \$22.95. Reviewed by Dr. Theodore Plantinga, professor of philosophy at Redeemer College, Ont.

When one looks closely at human attempts at communication, it is distressing to note how much misunderstanding persists despite our best efforts and intentions. This is also true in the case of philosophical discussion. Because of the great difficulty of achieving some sort of understanding with those with whom we differ on fundamentals, we ought to salute people who work hard at it and actually get somewhere.

Therefore I want to express my appreciation to two philosophers, Hendrik Hart (a Christian) and Kai Nielsen (an atheist and Marxist who has written extensively on philosophy of religion) for their effort in this regard, as manifested in their joint book *Search for Community in a Withering Tradition* (published in 1990 by the University Press of America and the Institute for Christian Studies).

While most books represent finished products, this one can best be characterized as a progress report. The book is composed of three papers each by Hart and Nielsen, all of which have been presented and discussed at one philosophical meeting or another, plus a lengthy retrospective by Hart written specifically for this book. In good measure the book is Hart en route as he takes Nielsen with the utmost seriousness and struggles to understand him and respond to him in a meaningful way.

Those who have no training in philosophy will probably not be able to follow the discussion, for it makes frequent appeals to other works and concepts; in this regard the book is not self-contained. (An index would have overcome this difficulty in part, but there is none). Essential background is some knowledge of what philosophers have come to call "foundationalism." An acquaintance with the work of Richard Rorty is also helpful.

What Hart has been trying to do is to demonstrate to Nielsen and others who care to listen in that Nielsen's brand of atheism has a *religious* basis and is in effect no more or less rational than the ultimate (religious)

commitment of the philosophically self-conscious Christian believer. Now this is the sort of thesis which atheist philosophers do not normally take seriously. But times have changed in philosophy. It is clear from the book that the series of exchanges with Hart over a number of years have indeed made an impression on Nielsen and softened his stance toward the believer.

Name-calling produces clarity

In the process the two philosophers call each other names. Hart writes that Nielsen is a rationalist, and Nielsen denies it. Nielsen in turn maintains that Hart's position undercuts itself and adds up to a form of relativism.

This name-calling, by the way, is not done in any mean-spirited fashion: a certain amount of labeling of one's discussion partner is inevitable in philosophy — and even healthy. Philosophers generally avoid labels for themselves, but their opponents try to attach them in an effort to understand and/or criticize. Without labels we simply couldn't talk the way we do every day: a language composed only of proper names would be of little use to us.

The overall agenda on which Hart is at work is shared with many other Christian philosophers: Alvin Plantinga, in particular, comes to mind here. Yet, whereas many appreciate such efforts and regard them as part of the task of Christian philosophy, few ever pursue the goal as doggedly as Hart has been doing through these discussions with Nielsen. Most philosophers are largely caught up within a thought world of their own. And the further they burrow into their own intellectual constructs, the harder it is for them to understand the work of other thinkers who differ with them on fundamentals. This is the reason why an education in philosophy can sometimes be so limiting, whereas one would expect it to be broadening.

Nielsen advocates an atheistic position which, he maintains, still leaves room for freedom and uncoerced discussion regarding the good life. In his own words: "I only claim, against a currently fashionable, rather uncritical cultural pessimism, sometimes religiously based, that the very idea of a rational consensus or an undistorted discourse which would yield a perspicuous representation of a good life for human beings, is not an incoherency. It can, and should, serve at least as a heuristic ideal for reflective moral agents. But again this does not make one a believer in

the sovereignty of reason...." Hart sees more dogmatism in this position than Nielsen admits to; indeed, he concludes that the position, despite its stated intention, adds up to a form of totalitarianism. Hart's own stance is well captured in the following words:

"Nielsen's position is an intellectualist position at best, which he thinks is non-relativist. And in the best tradition of rationalism, he also thinks it is universal, non-prejudiced, neutral, objective. But I think he is mistaken. Demanding that for the sake of solving the problems of humanity we all come into one (his) camp is proselytizing. For the time being we will have to survive with the multiplicity of perspectives. And that's our peculiarly modern predicament. We are too dangerously divided. Reason is a good instrument for reaching agreement in beliefs of a certain kind. But life is more than reaching agreement about such beliefs. If rational agreement were to function, important as it may be, as one ingredient next to others without playing any superjudge role in culture, its contributions may be positively welcomed. But viewed as setting universal standards for all judgment this instrument turns rationality into ideology."

Rationality should not set universal standards

Some parts of the book argue about the concept of religion. Hart maintains that Nielsen's atheism is "covertly supported by a religious appeal to reason and rationality." Hart goes on to maintain that there is "parity between Nielsen and religious believers." His argument is that "where belief in God functions [for the latter], it functions in much the same way that belief in reason functions for Nielsen. The division of 20th century people into religious people on the one hand and rational moderns on the other is not...a helpful one. Religious people can be...as fully rational as any. And rationalist moderns are, if I understand religion, embedded in real religious faith."

What, then, is religion? This Hart explains on pp. 195-6, but I will not take time to review his definition and comment on it. Instead I close this brief article with the hope that those with some philosophical aptitude or training will pick up the book for themselves.



Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

The God who avenges

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"O Lord, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth!" (Ps. 94:1)

The Chinese have a proverb: *The fire you kindle for your enemy often burns yourself more than him.* It's true, isn't it? In Mary Shelley's classic novel *Frankenstein*, the monster created by the young doctor eventually turns around and destroys its creator in horrible ways when the evil power of vengeance is unleashed.

One-liners

On stage, the quick-witted sparring of vengeful actors can bring down the house with laughter. Many of night-time television's sitcoms depend on sarcastic one-liners for ratings "wins." "The best revenge," said one actor to another in one of those fist-clenching situations, "is to live long enough to be a problem to your children." And the audience roars.

Politicians can play the game too. Cheap shots land in every newspaper across the country and become the seven-second clip on tonight's news. Lady Astor of Britain, earlier this century, carried on a running battle of the minds and tongues with Winston Churchill. Once, at a party, she said to him, "If you were my husband, I would poison your tea!" Vengeance turned round on her when Sir Winston quipped back, "And if I were your husband, I'd drink it!"

No laughing matter

Religious battlegrounds aren't always so peaceful. History is littered with crusades, inquisitions and holy wars. Sometimes, in the name of God, communities become tragic wastelands of righteous indignation turned mean and cynical. Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* shows how the witch-hunts in Salem, Mass., quickly evolved into spiteful orgies of pagan revenge — all done, of course, with the "holiest" of motives, and invoking God's name in support and blessing.

A September 16 editorial in *Christianity Today* laments the latest trend in Christian literature that seems bent on turning Christianity into fear and creating sales based on power and vengeance. Denominational squabbles often appear to do the same thing, creating "camps," spitting invectives, building schemes of power-brokering.

Pertinent prayer

With that in mind, Ps. 94 might be read as adding fuel to unholy fires and deepening the resonance of vengeful tones. God is named as one "who avenges" (vs. 1), who "pay[s] back" enemies (vs. 2), who "destroy[s]" my enemies (vs. 23). The prayer carries a sense of revenge, of religious warfare, of reformation by revolution.

And to our ears it seems to either play our fickle games or hurt our pious consciences. Can this song be sung in church today?

Maybe.

Only if three things are kept in mind, three things which are essential to the psalmist's cry: (1) vengeance is left to the Lord, and no mention is made in this Psalm of vindicating human crusader or terrorist tactics in some kind of "holy war"; (2) issues of good and evil rather specific and dramatic, making the identification of demonic intent unquestionable (see vss. 4-6); (3) the one who prays acknowledges his or her own imperfections and is not engaging in a band-wagon cause with mob-blinded madness (vs. 12).

Prayers like this one are extremely dangerous. In the mouth of a vengeful person looking for a bigger piece of the pie, Ps. 94 can be the worst kind of religious slander. But from the heart of the destitute, the pained, lonely and bruised child of God, this song is a pertinent prayer, unexcelled in its sense of divine dependence.

And when it's prayed in that context, astounding things happen!

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